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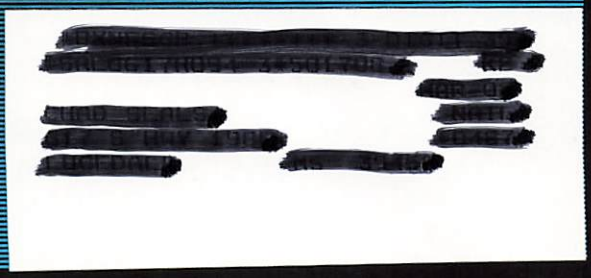

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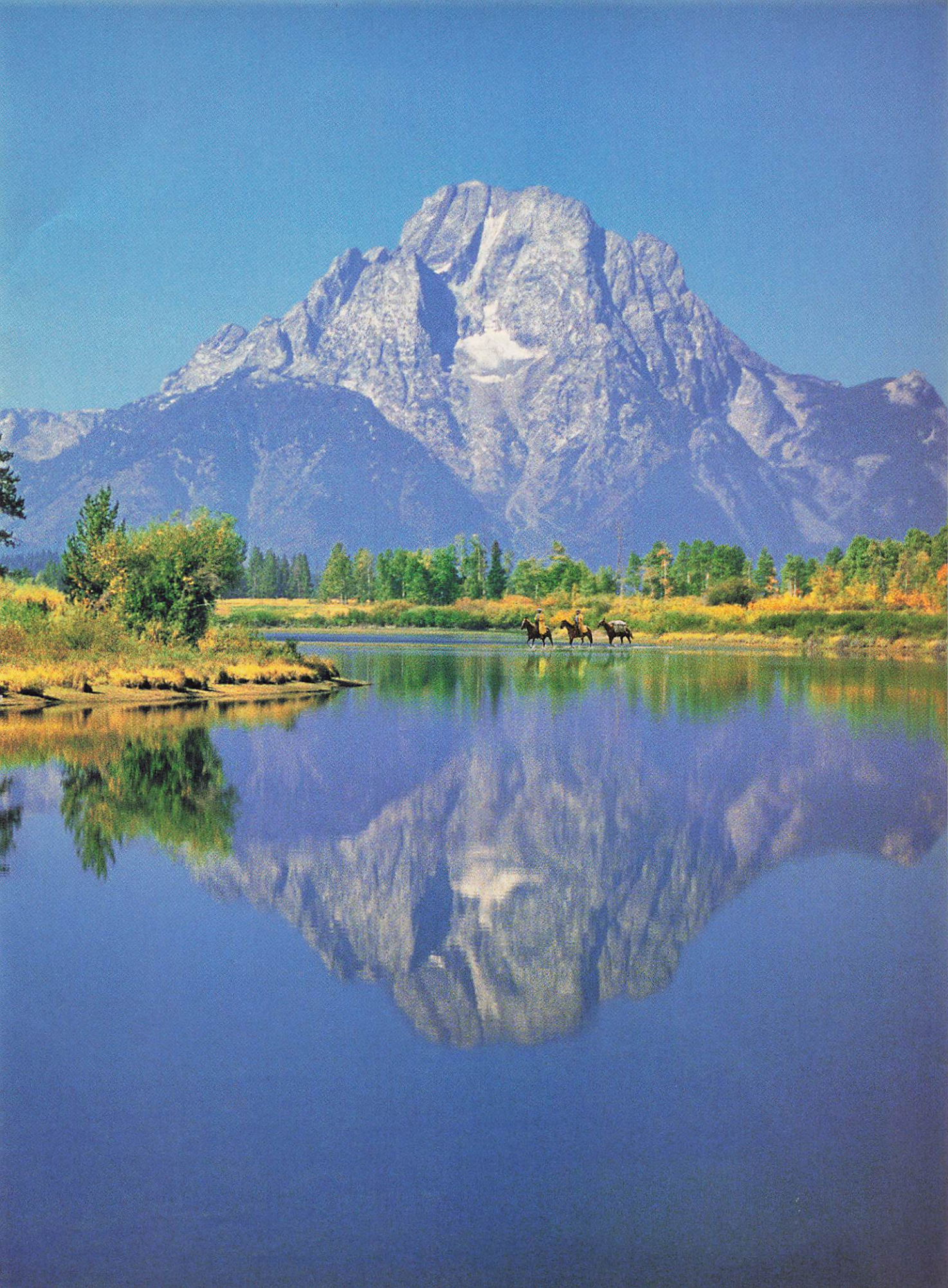

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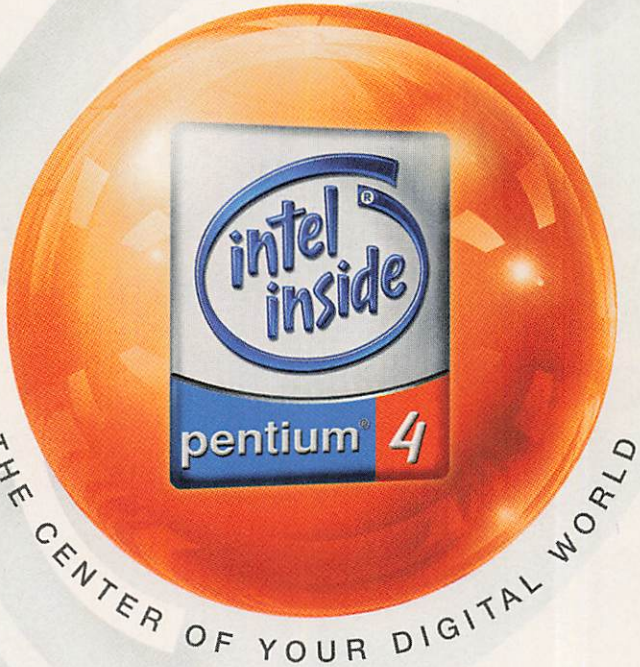

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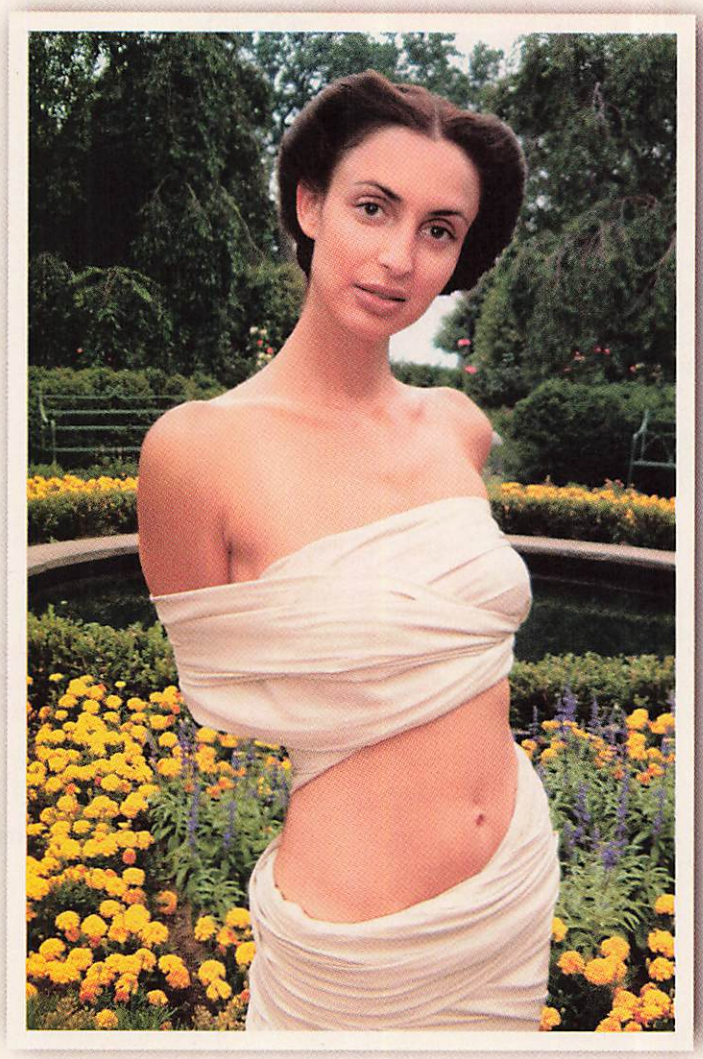

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VOLUME 7
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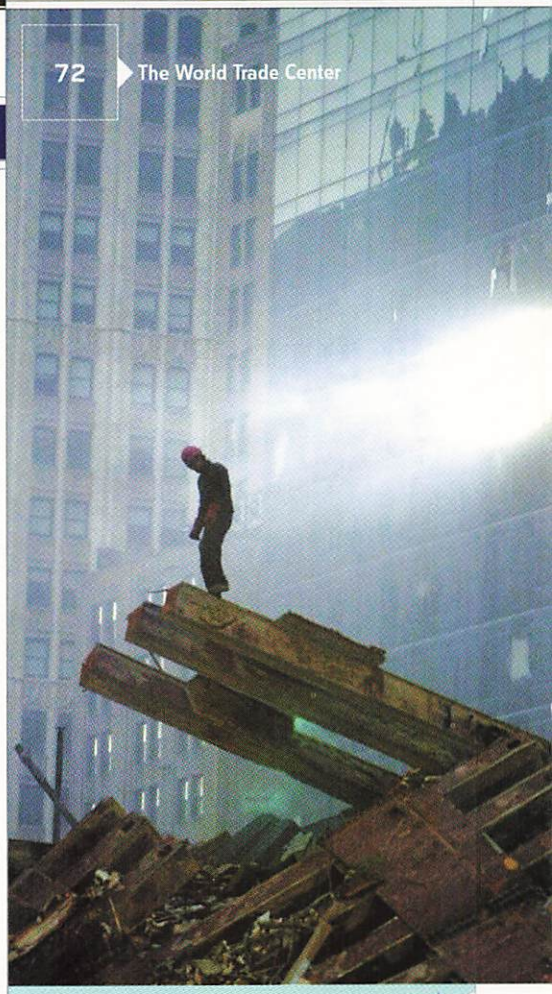

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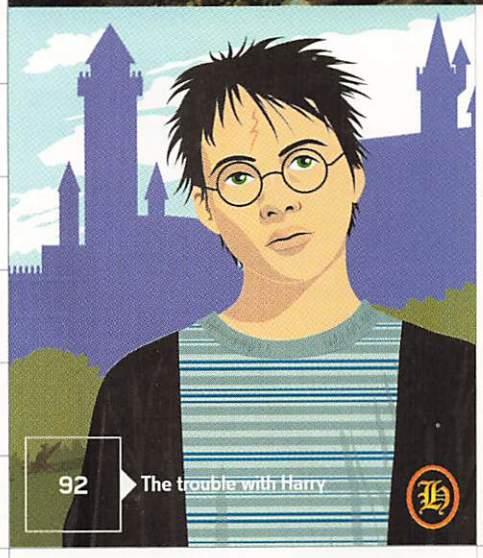

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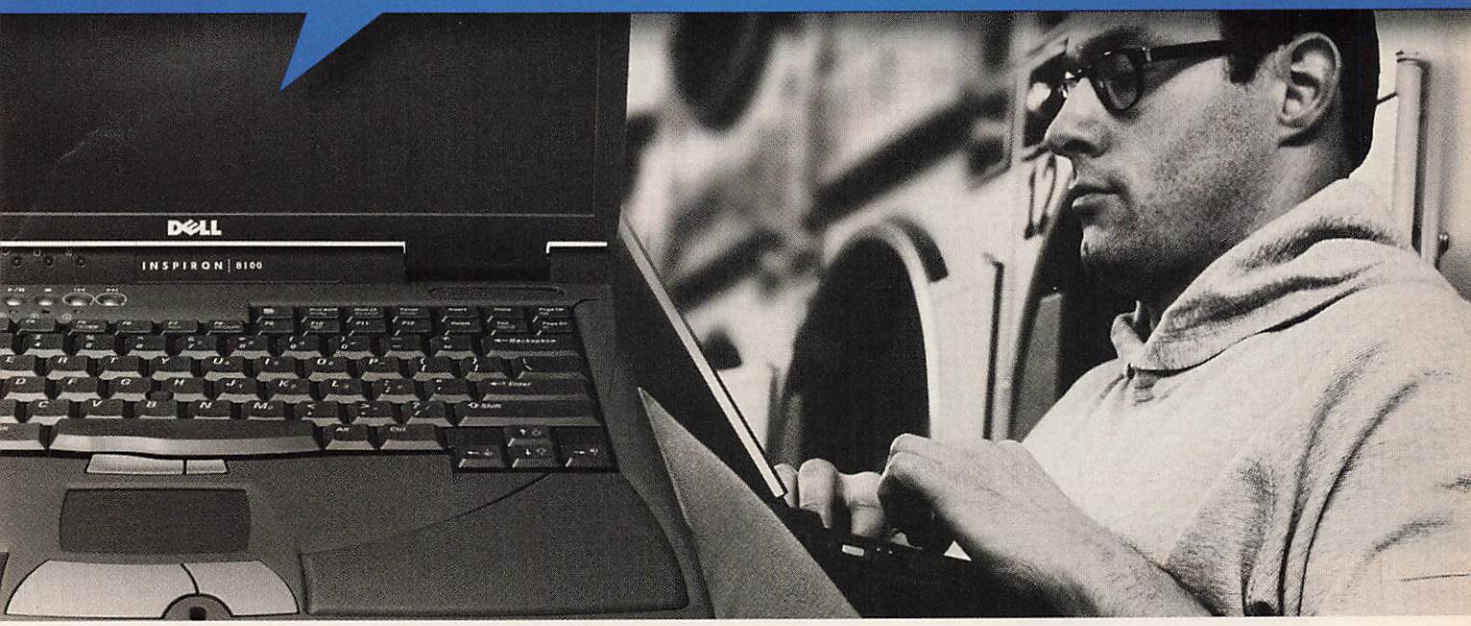

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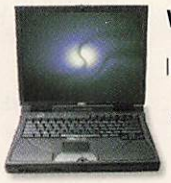

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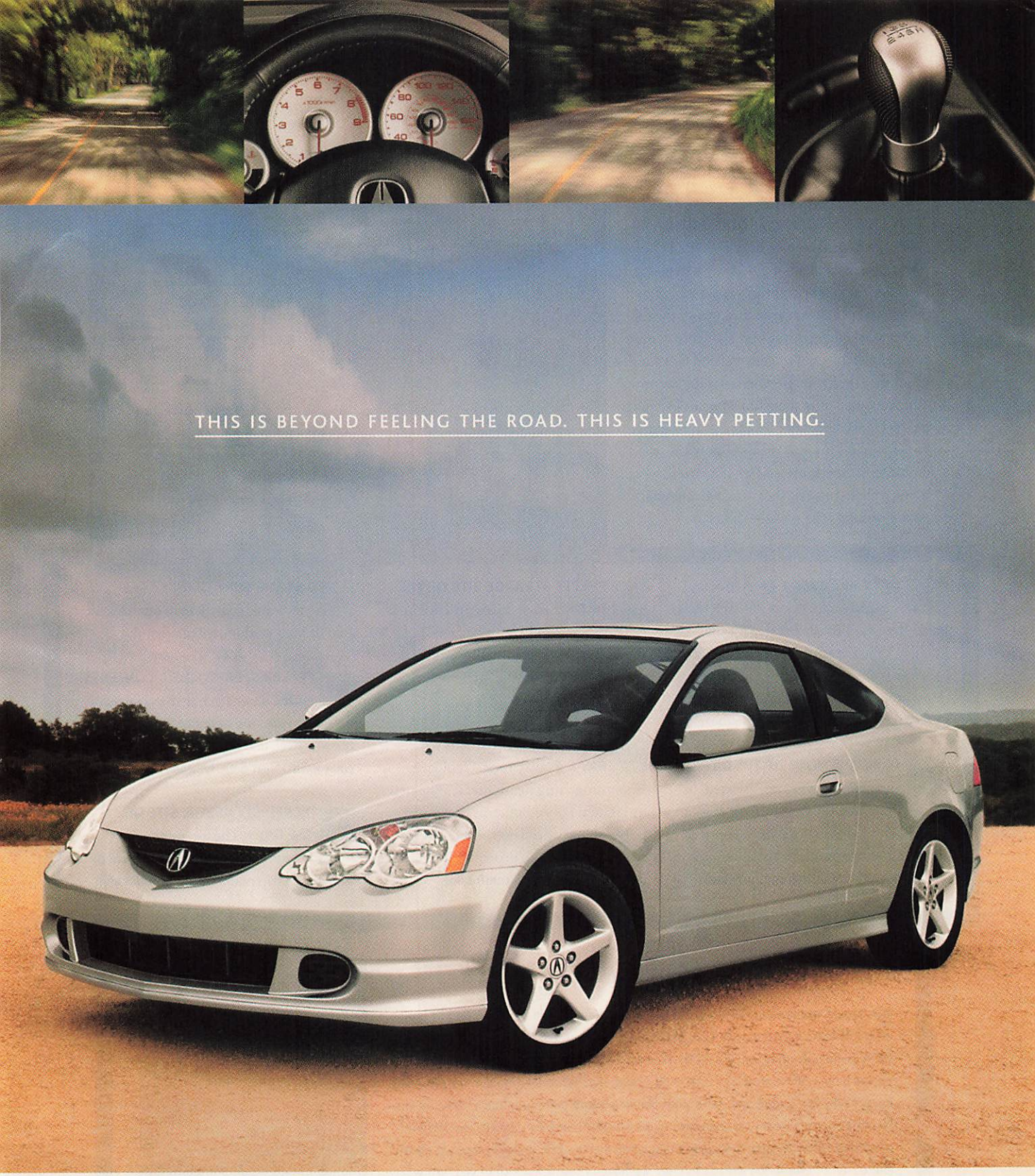

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DAILY NET BUZZ ▸ Every morning, Steve Knopper scours the Web, then assembles the ultimate briefing for your day online. Whether it's the latest on an overseas crisis or vicious infighting in an 'N Sync newsgroup, Steve will point you to whatever's most relevant today. **[yil.com/buzz]**

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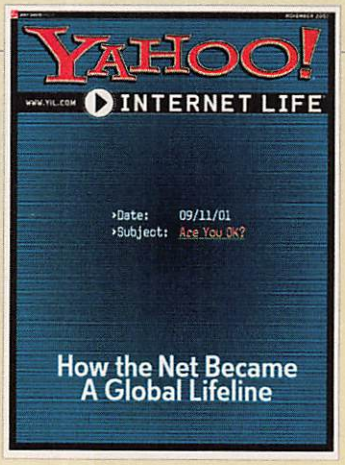
Note Worthy

How would you explain today's world to humans from the future? In the August issue, we published an excerpt from Douglas Rushkoff's novel *Exit Strategy*, and since then we've been uploading a new chapter each week to **YIL.com**. We also asked you to log on and help us annotate it for a 23rd-century audience. What, for example, was "techno" music? Why did people eat—and wear clothing made out of—animals? What is this "money" people seem so obsessed with? Several hundred eclectic and thought-provoking footnotes later, we're pleased to report that the *Exit Strategy* project has been a success. But we're too greedy to stop; we haven't heard from all of you. We want your footnotes, and we want them now. If you need further incentive, the 100 best annotations will be included in the final print version of the book, and their creators will receive a free signed copy. So don't delay: Drop by the site, read the text, and then help us write the future at **YIL.com/rushkoff**.



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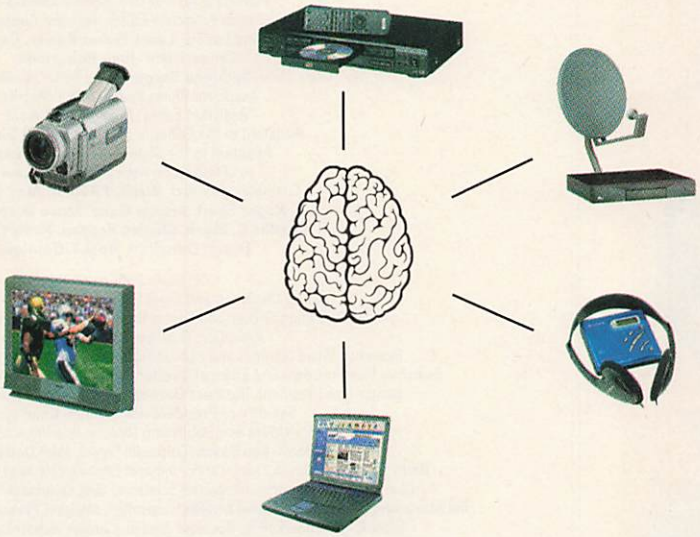

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The Net in a Time of Crisis

IN COVERING THE EVENTS PRECIPITATED BY THE ATTACKS on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, each of us has a professional and a personal perspective. Professionally, I've edited both a magazine covering television (*TV Guide*) and, for the past five years, one covering the Internet. On a personal level, I'm a resident of New York City, and, for the past few days, an eyewitness to the WTC tragedy and its aftermath.

On September 11, the two perspectives came together. I watched with my family from our apartment on East 38th Street in Manhattan, directly facing the Twin Towers, as the horror unfolded—from fiery impact to collapse. To the right of our window, where our television cabinet sits, a screen displayed the terrifying images. And several steps away, our always-on Internet connection displayed a browser set to a news site.

At the office, I gathered the staff so that we could begin to write and edit stories that would give our readers a sense of how the people of the world used—and sometimes misused—this newest link binding us together. As we scrambled in the few days we had before the presses rolled, I found myself pondering the ways we now absorb great and terrible events. Columnist Frank Rich wrote in *The New York Times* that during these days, we relied on old-fashioned TV reporting, which used "pre-Drudge journalistic standards," proving that we're "a country that still gathers at the tube, not the computer screen." A survey with the headline "Americans Choosing TV Over Internet" reported that relatively few people used the Internet as a "primary source."

Manifestly, it wasn't a "primary" source. Whoever said it was a contest? TV did its job tirelessly, often brilliantly. But we are now a country, and a world, that *also* gathers around our computer screens (and uses Web-enabled cell phones, and pagers, and...) to add to our understanding and to participate more deeply in what we witness. In fact, we gathered globally on the Net in unprecedented numbers to send e-mail, to instant-message, to hunt for the missing, to find local relief centers, to drill down into the news, to post new home pages and journal entries, to mourn, to grieve. We were able to express emotion collectively, not just have emotion beamed at us. Of course we watched TV, of course we volunteered, of course we talked to our neighbors. But we had, for the first time, another venue as well.

We gathered globally on the Net to send e-mail, to instant-message, to hunt for the missing, to find relief centers, to drill down into the news, to grieve

I believe that an either-or, black-or-white vision of technology is a reminder of what led to that other story of our lifetime—the shocking collapse of an Internet "economy" that was ceaselessly hyped as a substitute for all that came before. It was going to overtake, revolutionize, replace. What we've said before in these pages, and believe even more in the wake of these events, is that these new technologies are taking their place alongside other media in new, unexpected, and thoroughly human ways. We believe the Internet is integrating itself into our lives, never more than at moments of crisis. And that is our beat.

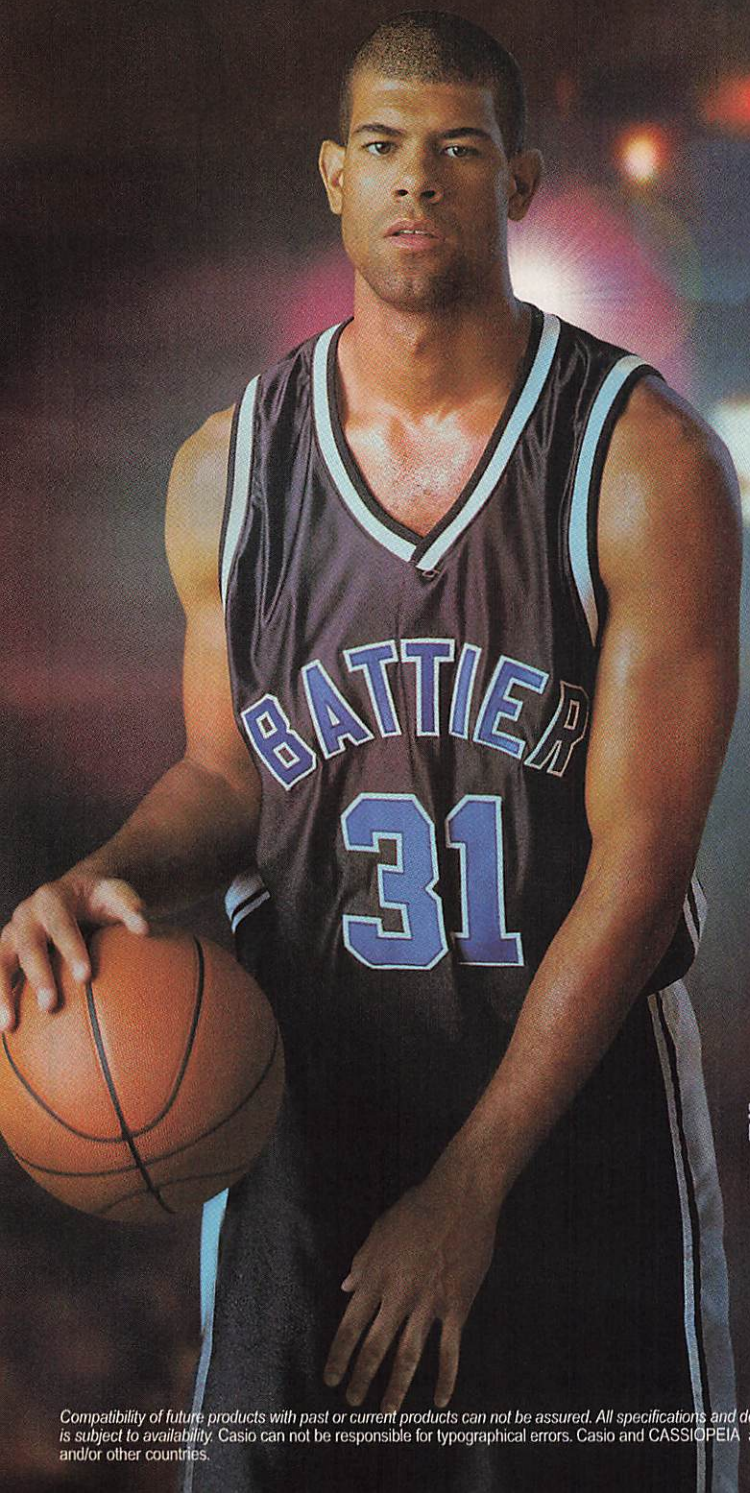
In this issue our staffers and contributors (as well as our copy editors, photography editors, and art directors) have assembled a kind of snapshot of how people reached out to one another online, how the Internet performed, and what we can say about the implications—at least at this moment, after the towers fell and before the missiles fly. And all we are saying is...stay connected.

X Barry Golson

BARRY GOLSON, EDITOR IN CHIEF

JAY GULLIXSON

"Come November 1, I will make more money than my dad has made in his whole life. That doesn't change who I am. I'll still recognize right and wrong. I'll still know a good deal when I see one."



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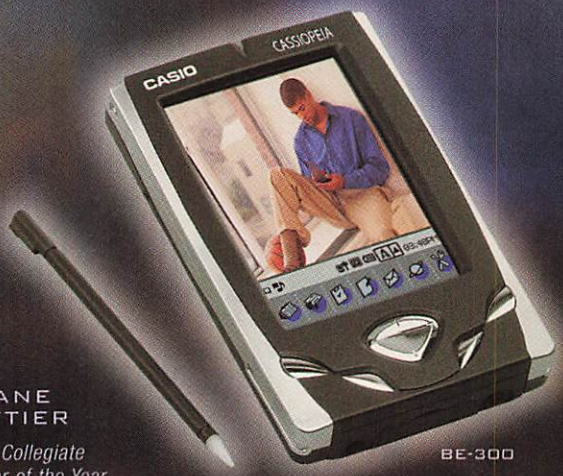

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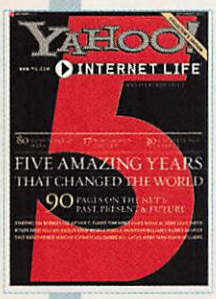

HAPPY DAYS

I enjoyed Roger Ebert's "'Web Days' Will Have a Happy Ending" [September '01, page 64]. Concerns about money seem to have clouded the judgment of many Internet investors, disenfranchised Net newcomers, and alienated an older generation of potential users. These are unnecessary casualties in the technological revolution. The Web is not as complicated as it may seem, and it's time for people to use it to the fullest.

The Web will continue to grow, and new and startlingly useful technology will add more convenience and meaning to our lives. Eventually, we will view cyber life and real life as integrated, rather than viewing cyber life as a distinct dimension that pulls humanity away from the human. I think *Y-Life* is contributing greatly to the Web's forward movement, and Ebert's optimism about the Web's future is refreshing—I give both a resounding thumbs-up. Aloha from Hawaii!

CHAS LEROY
@yahoo.com

REMEDIAL LESSON

Did anyone else notice a major gap in the State of the Net package [September '01, page 79]? There was no category for one of the top issues in the nation today—and certainly one of the very top reasons people (and especially K–12 children) are on the Net: education. Where were some of the truly popular sites supporting education, such as **Discovery.com** and **NationalGeographic.com**?

MARK GREATHOUSE
@aol.com

Unfortunately, space considerations forced us to cut back on some key categories—including education. See the October '01 issue for Best Student Research Sites. And check the January '02 issue to see who wins our annual 100 Best Sites awards in the Learning & Creativity sector. Both Discovery.com and NationalGeographic.com have earned that accolade in the past. —Ed.

CALL OFF THE PROBES

I liked Robert Scheer's "Why We Need More Safety in Numbers" [September '01, page 72]. It was right on target but did not go nearly far enough. Under federal law we have the right not to provide superfluous and irrelevant information. Unfortunately, those who ask for the data also have the right to refuse service if we do not provide the information they ask for. This continues to be legal, however wrong it may be.

We lose our rights to privacy when there are no controls over what is done with our data, and when there are no severe criminal and civil penalties for those who break the laws. Self-discipline within the industry has failed for decades.

JOE BOSCH
@yahoo.com

FIRST THINGS FIRST

In "30 Best Net Events" [September '01, page 116], you note: "9/96: Napster is still three years away when online visionary David Bowie becomes the first major recording artist to release a single online." Actually, Aerosmith put a song on the Web for download in 1994.

BILL WEITZE
@california.com

SAINTS ALIVE

I enjoyed "Ellis Island Comes Alive" [Click!, September '01, page 27], and I want to salute the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They have placed so much genealogical information into cyberspace and have made it easy for so many family researchers. It's about time!

SHARON DIANE ROBERTS
@ss.ca.gov

GEOGRAPHY QUIZ

Charles C. Mann errs in the opening paragraph of his article "Why 14-Year-Old Japanese Girls Rule the World" [August '01, page 98] when he writes, "Mai had moved to Tokyo...from way south in Hokkaido...." Hokkaido is actually the northernmost island of the four main islands of the Japanese archipelago. I guess it's just a simple error, but I'm sorry to admit that when I saw that, I lost interest in the remainer of the article.

DANIEL EVANS
@toyota.com

Charles C. Mann responds: I meant way in the southern tip of the northern island. I'm sorry I didn't express myself more precisely in the text. The sentence should have read something like "a village in the far southern tip of Hokkaido." I do hope you give the rest of the article another chance.

ADVANCING LANCE

I enjoyed the item about Tiger Woods in August '01's Web Guide: Entertainment & Sports ["Star Attraction," page 115]. I was glad to see sports finding space in *Y-Life*, and I wanted to point out the significant Web presence of another athlete, **Lance Armstrong [lancearmstrong.com]**. It's well worth a visit, offering lots to learn about cycling, cancer, family, and life.

KEITH HOUSER
@houghtonintl.com

SKIPPING INFO

Your August '01 issue suggests going to **The Playboy Advisor [playboyadvisor.com]** as a place to

SITE GAG

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"search the Q&A by keyword to find out how to stop CDs from skipping..." [Incredibly Useful Sites, "Live Like Hef," page 41]. No such luck. No info at all there.

C.S.
@yahoo.com

Technology editor Don Willmott responds: The Playboy Advisor online does have several listings regarding CD trouble. From the main Advisor page at **[www.playboy.com/sex/columns/advisor]**, *simply click on Search the Advisor, type in* CD, *and start reading through the search results (or, to sift through search results quickly, use your browser's Find function with the keyword* skip). *If all else fails, try this link:* **playboy.com/sex/columns/advisor/questions/19940306.html**. *Good luck!*

POPULARITY NOT THE POINT

Please do not give listings of popular sites anymore [State of the Net, September '01, page 79]. This is a real waste of time for anyone not in advertising. Please let us know what the best sites are, not the most popular.

MARK HUBER
@fairfieldglade.com

Looking at the most heavily trafficked sites was a good way to take the pulse of Web culture for a one-time feature. But in our ongoing mission for quality control, we pack every issue with the Net's top sites. Don't miss our annual 100 Best Sites for the year ahead in the January '02 issue. —Ed.

RELOAD: In "America's 100 Most Wired Colleges," [October '01, page 96], we mistakenly wrote that of the eight Ivy League institutions, only one made it into the Top 20. This should have read, "Top 10." The University of Pennsylvania was ranked 15th.

You talkin' to us? We hope so. Write to yilmail@ziffdavis.com.

YIL.COMMENTS

In response to the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, visitors to **YIL.com/boards** shared their thoughts.

At this time I am not proud to be a Canadian because of the lax policies our government has continually kept with regard to entry visas. North American life has now been changed. Forever. **RICKKENSCAR**

What happened on 9/11/01 was unconscionable by any standards. If their goal was to break our spirit, they miscalculated badly. They simply forced us to confront the fact that the world is a dangerous and unpredictable place. **JIMPO419**

This war can only be fought via information. Why are terrorists doing this? What motivates a man to give his life this way? I was the secretary of a political party many years ago in a country where there are a lot of people of the kind who committed this crime. **IDEASGUYAU**

The means of terror and the harm [terrorists] can do have become almost unimaginable. We cannot simply wait to see what these terrorists can come up with next. **ANONYMOUS**

For people in New York, e-mail and instant messaging were the *only* way to keep in touch. My family lives in Virginia and I live in New York. They tried to call me for hours as I was trying to call them. Phone lines were constantly busy. Finally each got to see that the others were okay via e-mail. **ANONYMOUS**

Sure, we

EXPERIMENTED

IN THE

SIXTIES.

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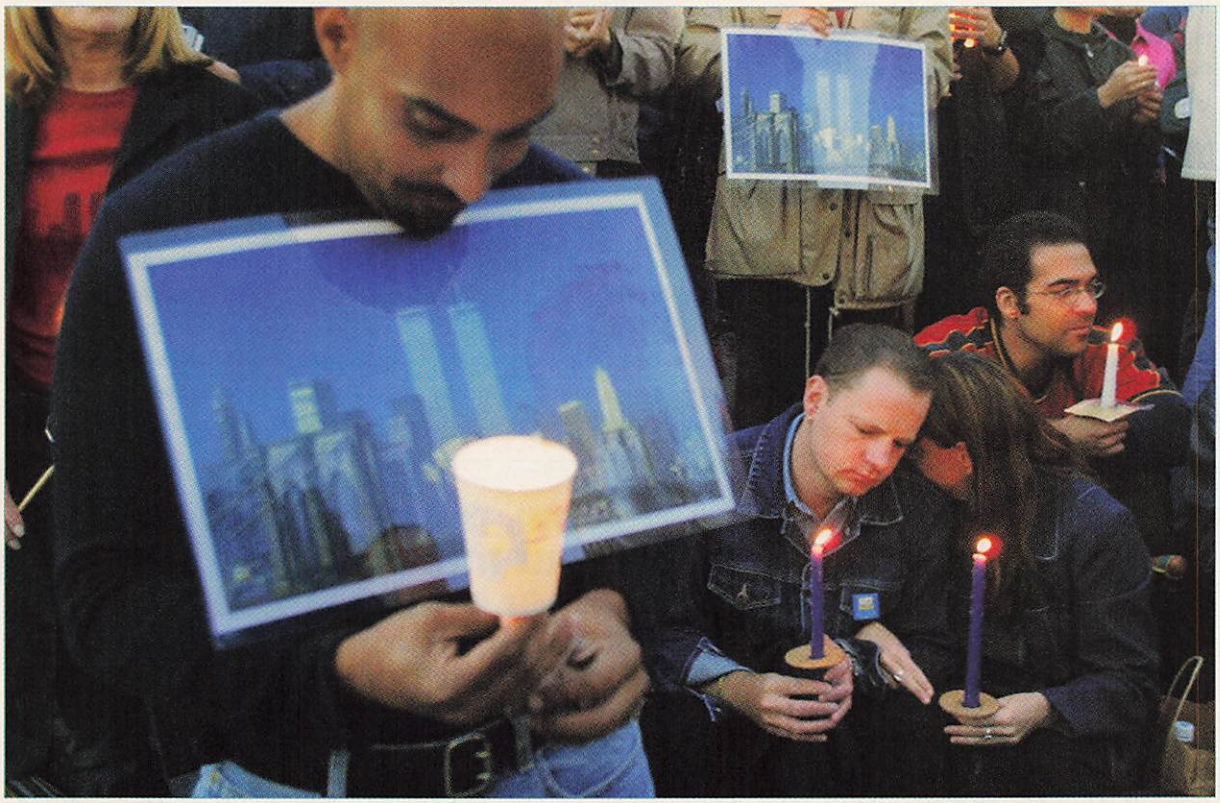
People, Places, and Trends on the Net >>> Edited by Ron Bel Bruno

NOVEMBER 2001



JOE RAEDLE/GETTYONE

A VIGIL FOR OUR CHANGED WORLD

The acts of terror that beset New York City, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001, were without precedent. So was the response of the Net's many communities, and that of Web sites old and new. Many humanitarian efforts—such as those of Amazon.com and CNN.com—allowed people to donate money to the Red Cross and other charitable organizations. Other sites listed survivors eager to let their far-flung friends and family know that they had escaped the attacks largely unscathed. Sadly, some opportunistic surfers saw the event as a platform for spewing racist bile or as a quick path to ill-gotten profit. In all, the many positive endeavors spoke volumes about the medium's capacity for bringing the world closer together, albeit in the worst of times.

28 WHILE THE KIDS DO PRESCHOOL, TRY A BIT OF FREE SCHOOL, USING **HOME OFFICE**'S CONCISE GUIDE TO ONLINE EDUCATION. BEST PART: NO GYM REQUIREMENT

30 WAIT, DON'T UNCORK THAT BOTTLE OF CHILEAN MERLOT JUST YET. **INCREDIBLY USEFUL SITES** HELPS YOU FIND THE BEST WINE FOR YOUR FILET MIGNON

32 LAST YEAR, THEY CALLED THE GRAVY "LACKLUSTER." GET OVER IT AND JOIN DAVID SHEFF, SURFING FOR A BETTER TURKEY TOPPER, IN **OLD WAY/NET WAY**

Emmy Award image courtesy of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

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BNUNIVERSITY.COM	Money Management for Women, Online Investing, Plan Your Estate	5	Online notepad, live chats, message boards, assignments, and quizzes	Hundreds of nonfinance courses also offered
FINANCIAL LEARNING.COM	Mutual Funds Beyond the Basics, Financial Planning for Singles	22	Online notepad, reminder service	Short lessons on a wide range of topics
SMARTMONEY UNIVERSITY.COM	Short-Term Investing	7	Quizzes, glossary of financial terms	Excellent lessons for novices; clearly written

netsavers

House Warming

SAVE TIME/MONEY

Bulbs.com knows a thing or two about light bulbs, so if you're looking for any sort of oddball item, it's a bright idea to check these listings. Find everything from boring 40-watt incandescents to chandelier bulbs, groovy black lights, hard-to-find automotive bulbs, outdoor halogens, and even heat lamps for your luxurious bathroom. If you're not sure what to buy or are doing some interior design, the lighting resource center helps by taking you room by room through a typical home to offer mini-lessons on how to light what, and why. Still have questions? Click on Ask Dr. Bulb and see if he can shed some light on your problem. Buy in bulk to save money, and don't worry about damage in shipping. We assume that Bulbs.com is very close with its bubble-wrap distributor.

Look It Up

SAVE MONEY

In the beginning was the word—lots of words, really, in big fat dusty encyclopedia volumes that made the family-room bookshelves sag. They begat CD-based encyclopedias, and we saw that those were good: cheaper, more colorful, and searchable. And they begat the online encyclopedias that we all use today. The world famous leader, **Britannica.com**, is now charging for access to its trove of information, so if you want a free encyclopedia alternative, try **Bartleby.com: Columbia Encyclopedia [bartleby.com/65]**, where you'll find 51,000 entries and 81,000 cross references. Though you won't enjoy the whiz-bang multimedia impact of a CD reference, it gets the job done, links you to relevant related content, and offers good bibliographies. **DON WILLMOTT**

PENNY JAR: SEAN DUNGAN/GETTYONE; LAMP: NEWSCOM

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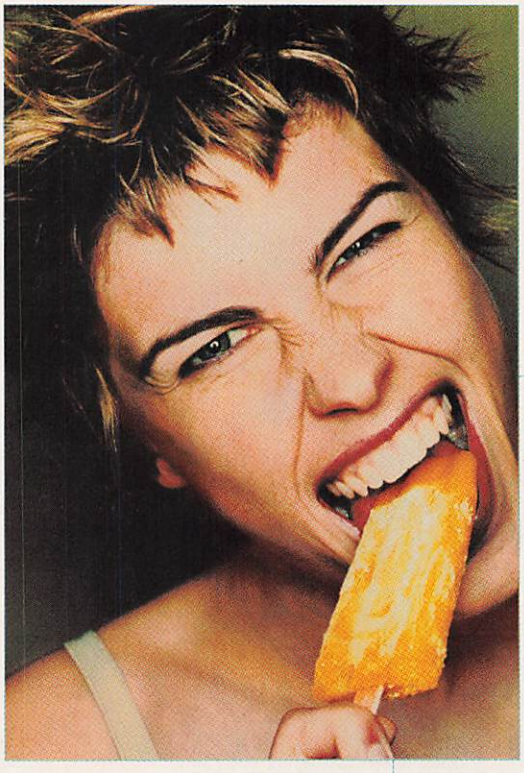
THIS MONTH'S MOST PRACTICAL DESTINATIONS BY JEREMY CAPLAN



Burn Off That Dessert

Don't feel guilty about that supersize sundae that you just devoured—use **WebMD Health: Dessert Wizard [my.webmd.com/dessertwizard]** to figure out how to make up for it. Select the treat you inhaled, then choose an exercise from a long list. The wizard returns with an estimate of how long you'll have to work out to burn off the calories you've consumed. For example, that sundae will cost you only five hours of jogging or seven-and-a-half hours of biking. No problem, right?

Find a Cybercafé

Afraid you'll miss your daily e-mail and Net fix when you're traveling? The next time you're planning a trip, whether it's to Stockholm or just two towns over, surf to **The Cybercafe Search Engine [cybercaptive.com]** and type in your destination. You'll get a list of cybercafés where you can log on while you're on the road, along with links to their sites and contact information. Also available: lists of cybercafés aboard cruise ships.

Learn the Rules

You're pretty sure your friends cheat at Monopoly, but you've still got your doubts. Don't make the accusation until you're certain you have a case. Just choose a card game, board game, or sport, and **RulesCentral.com** will give you a full rundown of all the rules and regulations. Whether you're studying up on Caribbean poker or searching for fishing laws in your home state, you can find the info online, print it out—and never get hoodwinked again.

Calculate UPS Costs

Are you sending a cashmere sweater to your friend in Norway? Wrapping up a package for your kid in college? The **UPS Quick Cost Calculator [wwwapps.ups.com/servlet/QCCServlet]** will calculate exactly how much the shipping will cost. Enter the place of origin, destination, dimensions and weight of your package and its insured value, and you'll immediately get a cost quote. Input up to five shipments at once for more than 30 origin countries to get rates for shipping to hundreds of destinations around the world.

Rent a Car Abroad

It's one thing to rent a Chevy at the Phoenix airport. It's quite another to rent a Fiat in Iceland or Turkey. How do you do it? Start at **Kemwel Online [kemwel.com]**, a rental brokerage that books through a network of local operators in 42 countries, from Austria to Australia, with a heavy emphasis on Europe. To plan your jaunt, just type in your starting point and your destination. Discounts and extras such as free cell phone service are often available, so if you're a frequent traveler, sign up for the site's newsletter to learn about special deals.

Find Free Music

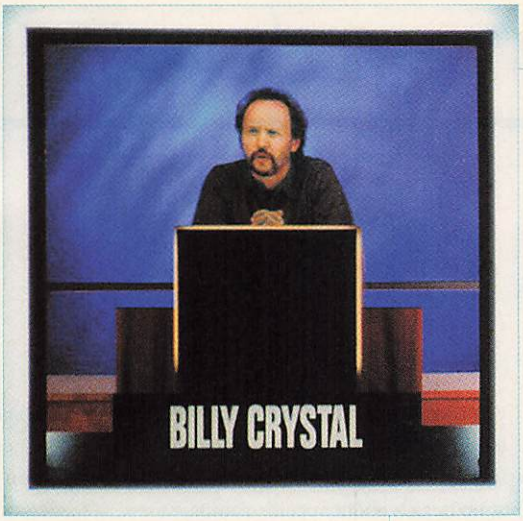
We've been guiding you through the post-Napster world for months now. Here's another suggestion. Let **AfterNapster [afternapster.com]** help you locate alternative sources of free music. Simply select your operating system and the file-sharing systems you prefer (e.g., Napster, Gnutella, FTP, and so on), and the site will spit back a list of free music sources from which to choose. The reviews from other users will help you steer clear of the slower, buggier services.

Master Wine-Food Combos

Wondering whether a rich merlot will pair well with mutton? **EatDrinkDine [eatdrinkdine.com]** offers a quick and easy way to find a red that suits your needs. And do the site's expert chefs and sommeliers know their whites? Does salmon go with sauvignon blanc? Click around a bit more and you'll find surprisingly engaging mini-lectures that take it to the next level with herbs, spices, entertaining, and strategic grocery shopping.

SEND US NEWS OF YOUR USEFUL FIND! WRITE TO IUS@ZIFFDAVIS.COM

WOMAN: TIM MACPHERSON/GETTYONE; WINE BOTTLE: UNTITLED/NONSTOCK



Get Free TV Tickets

If you've ever wanted to be there when Whoopi Goldberg cracks jokes in her Hollywood Square, here's your chance. **Free TV Tickets [tvtix.com]** lets you pick the show you'd like to see and then print your own tickets to bring to the studio. (Admission is never guaranteed, so be sure to arrive early.) When we checked, choices included the new *I've Got a Secret* and *Dennis Miller Live*. If you want to be an extra in a film, the site has a movie section, too. All TV tapings are in the Los Angeles area, so be sure to peruse the list when you plan your next trip to Hollywood.

Check Your E-Mail Anywhere

Imagine—all your e-mail from all your accounts, available anytime and anywhere. For people with lots of personal and professional e-mail addresses, that can be a tough goal to achieve, but **Mail2Web.com** can get you at least part of the way there. The site lets you easily pick up your e-mail messages from any POP3 mail account. There's no fee and no need to register: Just sit yourself down in front of any Net-connected computer, type in your e-mail address and password, and browse through your messages. The service is completely private; no e-mail is stored on its servers.

Speed Up Your Access

Everyone hates slow Net access, and swearing at the modem hardly ever works. Maybe it's time to join the fast-access crowd. If you don't have a clue about the high-speed Internet services in your neighborhood, try **Getspeed.com**, where you can find the nearest providers of broadband access via DSL, satellite, cable modem, or wireless. Your ZIP code is all you need to get quick tips on available connections.

Investigate Your Last Name

Genealogists, here's some fertilizer for your family tree. Type your last name into **ProGenealogists: Your Surname in the U.S. [progenealogists.com/surnamestudy.htm]** to find out how common it is in different parts of the U.S. If you're a Jones or a Johnson, you'll find high density all across the country, whereas Scandinavian names will produce a midwestern concentration. Of course, if your last name is, say, Hawthorn, you might find that the map looks a little lonely. History buffs can also check to see how common their name was in 1850, 1880, 1920, and 1990.

Diagnose Car Problems

You're late, your car won't start, and you have no idea what to do. Before you get your hands greasy, head back inside, log on, and check **AIC AutoSite: Troubleshooting Guide [autosite.com/garage/symptoms/trblsht.asp]**. To isolate the cause of the problem, click on the types of symptoms you're seeing (or smelling—a rotten-egg odor could mean ignition trouble) and get back a quick diagnosis. No matter how auto-ignorant you are, you'll find the site's guidance helpful, and you'll sound a bit smarter when AAA finally arrives.

...and downloads

PRINT CD COVERS

Napster may be but a shadow of its former self, but the MP3 revolution continues. Here's a way to make your custom-compiled CDs look as good as they sound. **CoverPro [directlogic.com/coverpro.html]** lets you design your own cover art and CD labels. Not into burning your own CDs? Use the program to create snappy labels for your video collection, floppy disks, or other media. *Free to try; $9.95 to buy.*

HELP CURE CANCER

The National Foundation for Cancer Research wants your help. Its United Devices Cancer Research Program is attempting to find a cure for leukemia and other diseases by analyzing the cancer-fighting potential of hundreds of millions of molecules. By linking your PC to the project via the **Intel Philanthropic Peer-to-Peer Program [intel.com/cure]**, you can donate your computer's excess processing power to the cause. The NFCR estimates that the initiative could cut the time required to develop new treatments and drugs from 12 years to as few as five. *Free.*

PLAY WITH YOUR HAIR

Hair Pro [visualmusic.com] is designed as a tool for salon owners to tempt their clients into undergoing pricey makeovers, but why let stylists have all the fun? Start with a digital photo of yourself; then toy with the different styles and colors—there are 1,300 diverse combinations—until you find a look that would make even Jennifer Aniston jealous. *$59.95.* **DON WILLMOTT**

BILLY CRYSTAL: AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS, COLUMBIA TRISTAR; KATE PIERSON; LYNN GOLDSMITH/CORBIS

COMPARING THE TRIED-AND-TRUE WITH THE NET-AND-NEW BY DAVID SHEFF

RENTING A CABIN

OLD WAY

1 For a family weekend, we called around to get recommendations from our friends for cabins to rent in the Trinity Alps, in northern California. It's a beautiful wilderness area with many opportunities for fishing, boating, hiking, and camping. Our phone calls turned up two choices: a small, funky, and cheap cabin; and one that was pristine, pricey, and included a huge deck with a hot tub. After calling both places, we decided to have a look online.

TIME ELAPSED 30 minutes on the telephone

COMMENTS For this trip, "cheap and rustic" fit the bill. Maybe next time we'll spring for a luxurious spread.

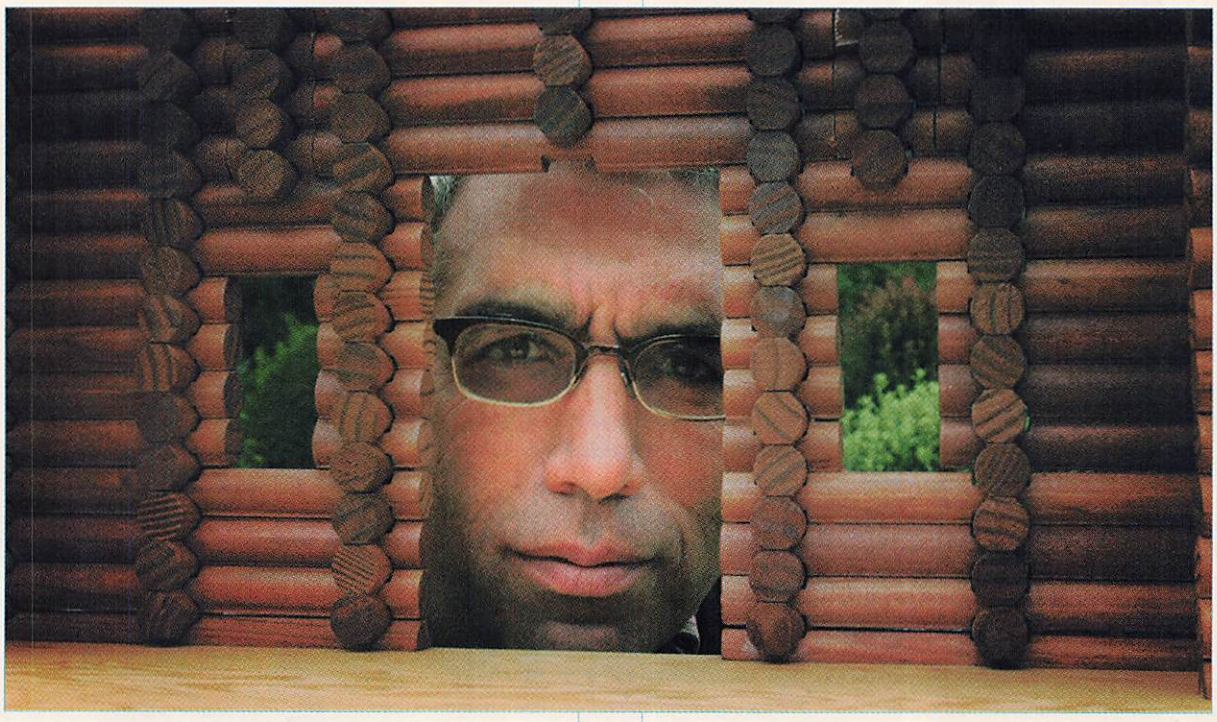
NET WAY

1 On the Net, I found **Trinity Alps Adventures [gorp.com/trinityalps]**, which books cabins and larger vacation homes in the area. There's an information request form online, but no details about specific cabins.

2 **Coffee Creek Chalet [www.coffeecreekchalet.com]** was a bit fancier than we wanted for this particular trip. **Coffee Creek Ranch [coffeecreekranch.com]** is a full-fledged dude ranch and fairly expensive. There was a very nice-looking place on **Carr Creek Cabin [carrvilleinn.com/pages/Cabin/cccabin.htm]** that seemed perfect, but it was relatively pricey, too.

TIME ELAPSED 24 minutes

COMMENTS These were good choices, but neither cheap nor funky, so we went with our friends' recommendation.



BART NAGEL

WINNER: OLD WAY Though there were more choices online, this time we got lucky asking friends.

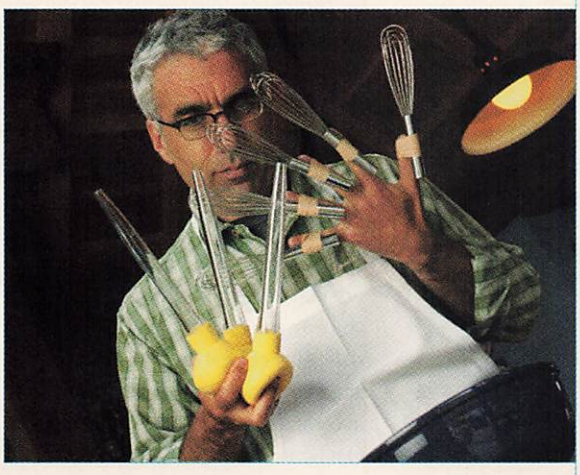
MAKING THANKSGIVING GRAVY

OLD WAY

1 My mother's recipe for gravy is simple: Melt butter and stir in flour; slowly add strained pan drippings and turkey stock, and then a little milk. Finally, season with salt and pepper. It's tried and true—and darn good. But I thought it might be fun to try something new for a change.

TIME ELAPSED 20 minutes cooking

COMMENTS Our supply of cookbooks has many good gravy-making tips, but no flashy recipes. So I decided to head to the Net for something more exotic.



NET WAY

1 Tried several of the numerous recipes I found online. **A Recipe I Didn't Get From My Mother: Gravy with Madeira [www.netecon.com/turkey_gravy.html]** adds Madeira wine, Marmite, and sour cream to the basics. It was richer and more complex than traditional Thanksgiving gravy.

2 It was also better than another alternative, found at **RecipeSource: Gravy for Turkey or Chicken [recipesource.com/side-dishes/sauces/09/rec0948.html]**, which included chopped hard-boiled eggs and giblets atop the basic gravy recipe.

3 My favorites were at **Epicurious [epicurious.com]**: giblet cream gravy, caramelized onion–basalmic gravy, and an awesome ancho-chili gravy with a nice kick.

TIME ELAPSED 15 minutes surfing the Net and 20 minutes cooking

COMMENTS At Epicurious, readers rate the recipes, which can help you avoid a failed experiment in a house full of hungry friends and relatives.

WINNER: NET WAY **Sorry, Mom. You're way ahead on love, but the Net has you beat on variety.**

RECYCLING PRINTER CARTRIDGES

OLD WAY

1 In the past, when this issue came up, I called and was told that our local computer store accepts cartridges for recycling.

2 Waited until I had accumulated a couple of empties, then drove out and dropped off the old cartridges.

TIME ELAPSED 40 minutes driving

COMMENTS It's free and easy.

NET WAY

1 Is there an even easier way from home? **We Buy Empties [webuyempties.com]** pays for cartridges, but the sender must spring for shipping (although there's a rebate on 10 or more).

2 Many charities collect and recycle printer cartridges online, but I couldn't find one in our area. **Recyclers USA [recyclersusa.com]** and **FundingFactory [www.fundingfactory.com]** can help you raise money for your local school or library.

TIME ELAPSED 20 minutes

COMMENTS If it's possible in your area, why not simultaneously recycle and contribute to charity?

WINNER: TIE **There are myriad ways to do the right thing.**

CRUSADING FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND THE INTERNET WAY BY LAURA FISHER KAISER

REBATE DEBATE

Q I bought almost $5,800 worth of DVDs that were free after rebate on **CyberRebate [cyberrebate.com]**. However, the company filed for Chapter 11 before my rebate was processed. I used my Discover card and have already paid my balance in full. Will I be liable for the charges?

ERIK DiTIZIO
Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey

A CyberRebate's gimmick was to charge outrageous prices for items and promise rebates of up to 100 percent. The company hoped that customers would forget to apply for the rebates. What the site didn't anticipate was the zealousness of bargain hunters, whose dedication to their personal bottom line ensured the collapse of this "business model."

Some credit card companies might take the rebate part of the service offered by CyberRebate into consideration. **Discover [discovercard.com]**, however, believes that the defunct Web site is your problem. "If our card members have not received merchandise, we will certainly help them put that in dispute and work that through," says a spokesperson for Discover Financial Services. "But if they have received merchandise and are disputing the rebate portion of the transaction, we are unable to assist them, because the arrangement is separate from the purchase."

No matter which credit card you use, state your claim in writing and send it via certified mail with a return receipt. You're supposed to do this within 60 days after the first erroneous bill, but it wouldn't hurt for you to have a paper trail even at this late date. The creditor has 90 days to resolve the dispute. (Note that "resolve" does not necessarily mean "credit your account.")

There's not much else you can do until the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of New York rules on the case. Keep checking **[www.nyeb.uscourts.gov/announcements.htm]** for updates and instructions on how to file a claim. In the meantime, commiserate with other rebate junkies on bulletin boards such as Yahoo! Groups: **CyberRebate-Support4Lost-Rebates [ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/CyberRebate-Support4Lost-Rebates]** and **Cyberrebate Rebate Recovery Alliance [communities.msn.com/CyberrebateRebateRecoveryAlliance]**.

> **'If our card members have received merchandise and are disputing the rebate portion of the transaction, we are unable to assist them'**
>
> SPOKESPERSON FOR DISCOVER FINANCIAL SERVICES

STUCK IN TRAFFIC

Q I ordered a Dodge Ram cargo van from **CarsDirect.com** on March 28. Since the company could not locate a vehicle with the options I selected, it ordered one from the factory. I was told that the standard order time is six to eight weeks but that it hoped for a "quicker turnaround," possibly four to five weeks.

Four weeks later, CarsDirect told me the van would ship May 3 and that I should receive it two weeks after that. On May 15, CarsDirect told me the vehicle was "in transit." As of June 5, 10 weeks from the time of order, the van had not arrived, so I called Chrysler's consumer assistance hot line and was told that the van had not shipped on May 3. I canceled the transaction and am seeking reimbursement for nearly $900 in car rental costs, as well as a refund of my $300 deposit.

JEFFREY DONIUS
Romeo, Michigan

A If someone told me that my van was "in transit," I might think delivery was imminent. Apparently, that's not how the auto industry works: CarsDirect informs me that it could take as long as a month to ship a vehicle. Says a CarsDirect spokesperson, "No delivery date is ever promised, because of things like strikes and assembly line problems." You'll notice that the company was careful to give you no more than a "projected" shipping date. After several detailed e-mails in the site's customer log, there's a breakdown in communication around the time your van was supposed to ship, and no one explained to you the cause or duration of the delay. But the decision to sell your car before you had a replacement was yours; thus, CarsDirect will not reimburse your rental fees. The good news: CarsDirect will refund your $300 deposit, which isn't bad, considering it's stuck with a customized van.

Ask E-venger for help at www.yil.com/evenger, or by e-mail: evenger@ziffdavis.com.

ITEM OF INTEREST

Once you've corrected a billing mistake, check subsequent bills to make sure you're not being charged interest or other penalties. For more tips: The Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights [consumerwatchdog.org].

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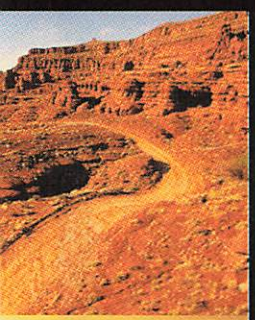
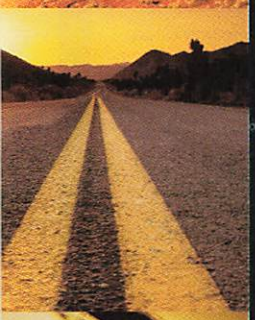
Goat Story

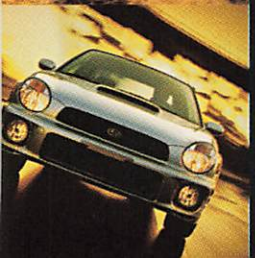
You've always been a fan of their cheese; now check out their fleece. Cashmere is an undeniably soft and luxurious fabric that was popularized by French royalty—which might explain why these offerings are dominated by regal reds and warm grays. Simply log on to the Net and check out ❮1❯ DKNY's crew neck sweater, $198 [eluxury.com], and ❮2❯ LORO PIANA slippers, $175 [eluxury.com]—you'll never want to leave the house. But when the outside world requires your presence, pull on ❮3❯ SAKS FIFTH AVENUE socks, $36, and ❮4❯ a collared sweater, $280 [saks.com]. Though a four-season fabric, cashmere is ultimately a winter pleasure. Try this pair of ❮5❯ PORTOLANO cashmere-lined leather gloves, $85 [eluxury.com], and ❮6❯ a solid or plaid BROOKS BROTHERS scarf, $168 [brooksbrothers.com]—even if your blood is red, not blue. **MEAGHAN O'NEILL**

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAY ZUKERKORN

STYLED BY LAURIE SCHECHTER







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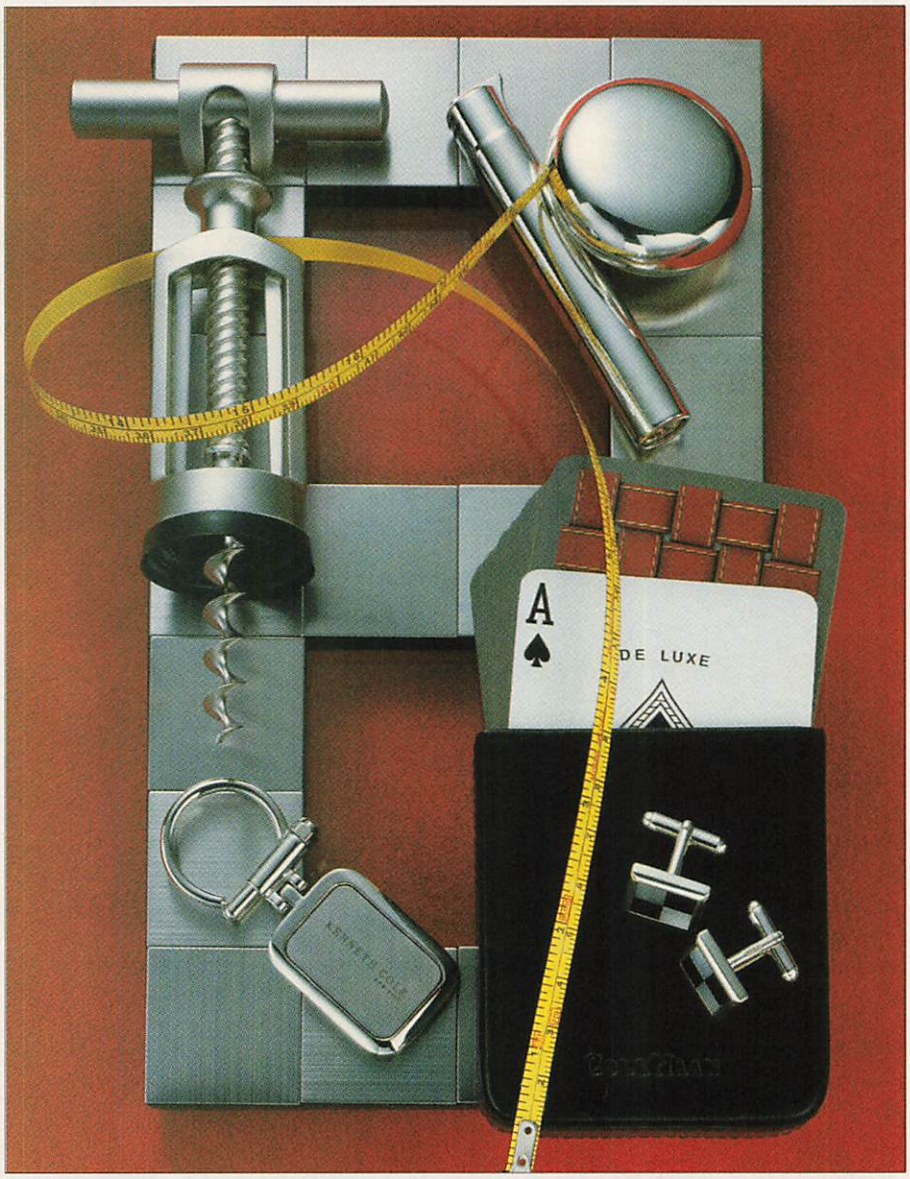

Left: Michael Graves frame, $13 [target.com]; Monopol corkscrew, $90 [wine.com]; lighter, $165, and tape measure, $145 [polo.com]; Cole Haan cards and case, $65 [www.colehaan.com]; cuff links, $235 [www.tateossian.com]; key fob, $10 [kennethcole.com].

Not-So-Heavy Metal

Q » I've got plenty of business clients to shop for during the holidays, but I'm not leaving my desk and I'm not even sure what's appropriate. Ideas?

A » I've learned a few things over the years about gift giving, and, of course, we all know how shopping online saves time and energy. Keep in mind that client gifts should always be practical. Picture frames, cuff links, key chains, and small silver accessories will surely be put to good use. If there's a wine connoisseur on your list, a corkscrew can be a thoughtful and useful present. Remember, you don't have to spend a lot of money (especially around the holidays) to make a good impression. When you order online, don't forget to request gift wrapping—and don't log off without the confirmation number!

Q » My girlfriend is always up on the styles and hot spots of the moment—unlike me. Any sites I can hit to get into her head?

A » All the chic chicks drop in regularly at **Vivianlives.com**, the Flash-animated hangout of the terminally cool Vivian Livingston. Site creator Sherrie Krantz, a former public relations pro for the likes of Calvin Klein and DKNY, describes the virtual hood as "*The Real World* meets Barbie." No wonder Viv can't help but be a model of urban style.

The site is a maze—just like a woman, says Krantz—and touches on women's issues, celebrity gossip, and even the cocktail du jour, all with equal irreverence. "In one way or another I have something in common with every woman," says its cartoon heroine.

Besides a winning, self-deprecating sense of humor, Viv has great gift ideas from Bebe, Nautica, and other hip designers (hint, hint).

Warren Christopher has the answers. Write to askwarren@ziffdavis.com.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LISA CHARLES WATSON

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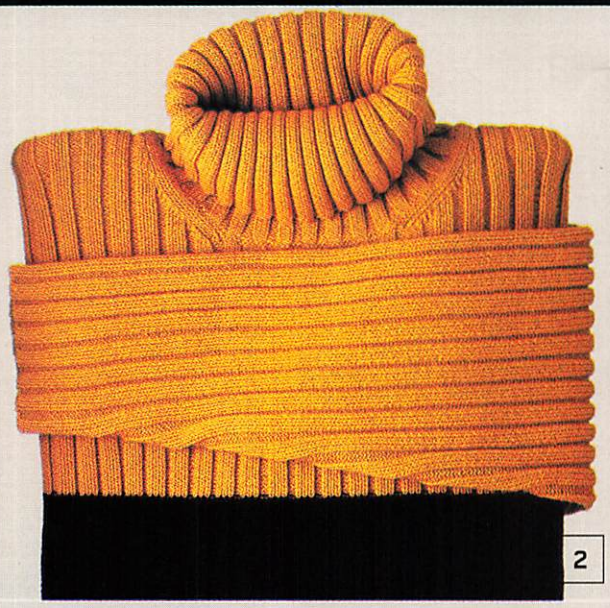

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3

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The Great Tailgate Party

1 » SURE HANDS
You'll never get cold playing fantasy football in the den, but sitting in the bleachers for overtime is another story. Keep warm with these leather and shearling gloves, $88, from **Jcrew.com**.

2 » SCRIMMAGE LINES
The first quarter is sunny, but two hours later you're sorry you didn't wear another layer or two. Next time, try this striped cotton turtleneck, $38, from **American Eagle Outfitters [ae.com]**.

3 » REDSKIN
It's hard remembering all those great football stats and facts, so keep your Palm close to the vest—in this case, a polyester and fleece zip-up, $78, from **Timberland [timberland.com]**.

4 » NO MEAN CLEAT
Whether you're climbing stadium stairs or lounging in the VIP skybox, stay well-heeled with these waterproof Monsoon shoes, $125, from **Rockport [rockport.com]**. **MEAGHAN O'NEILL**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVIES+STARR

SONY

DREAM ON™ >>>>

The white water in the river.

The white lettering on the paddle.

The white splash of sunlight on the helmet.

The white knuckles on the fingers.

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Digital 8

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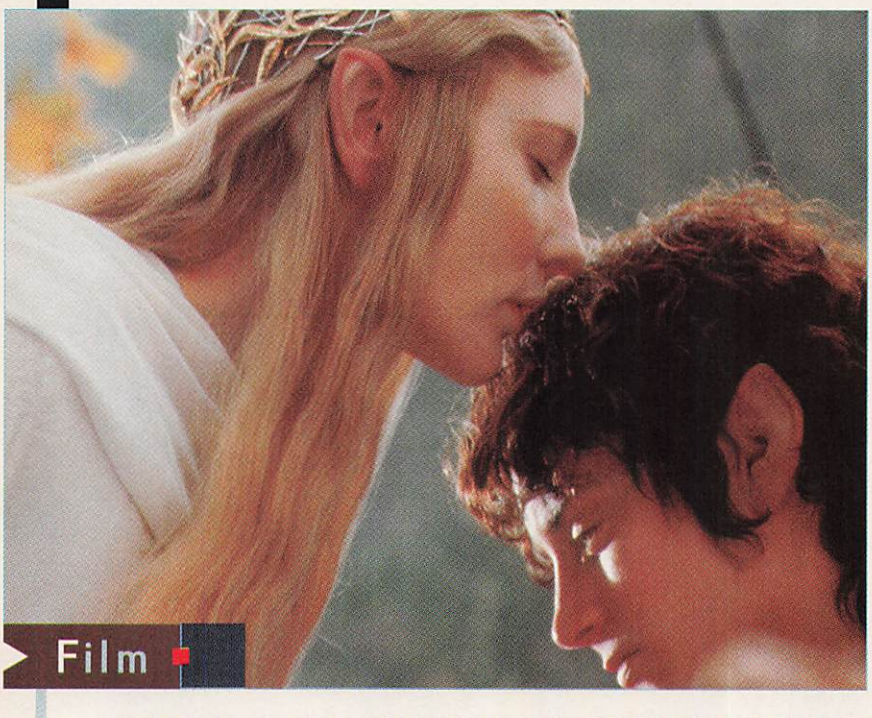
Content

what to watch, hear, read, and play online



Film

RINGING IN OUR EARS

The Lord of the Rings presents a case study in how to use the Web to court your fans

AS THE RELEASE OF NEW LINE CINEMA'S *THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING* QUICKLY APPROACHES, its online promotion is reaching a fever pitch. Of course, incessant online promotion isn't new, but what's refreshing is that (so far) the folks at New Line have not been overly protective of their material—J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, of which this film (starring Elijah Wood, above, with Cate Blanchett) is the first installment. One reason: The filmmakers are working from books that have been in print for almost 50 years and already have an entrenched online community. But it's also a sign that studios are finally recognizing that obsessive fan worship is a *good* thing.

As a result, the film's official site has no qualms about posting links such as the one for cast member Sir Ian McKellen's official site, **Ian McKellen [mckellen.com]**, where he reports gossip from the set of the film and even offers the occasional spoiler. Just as with the *Star Wars* saga—but to an even greater extent—the online world surrounding the Tolkien books is massive and self-sustaining, fed constantly by fan fiction, scholarly analysis, original artwork, and pretty much anything else conceivable. Tolkien fan sites such as **TheOneRing.net** and **Lord of the Rings.com [lordoftherings.com]** give regular updates about the film, along with a thorough background in the world of Tolkien's »

CHECK IT OUT GO TO YIL.COM/CRITICS FOR MORE INFO

Film Shorts

MANTELOPE Ever wonder what would happen if a half-man, half-antelope moved to Po-Dunk and crossed paths with a gun-toting local yokel named Hunter Jack? Well, wonder no more: Mantelope is here. Stir in a hillbilly narrator, Hunter Jack's trophy wall (adorned with the head of a furbearing Bass-a-Lope), and Mantelope's Forrest Gump-like ability to emerge from every situation smelling like the town hero, and you've got a quirky, entertaining cartoon short. This one's kid-friendly, weaving in a subtle antidiscrimination message while still providing plenty of laughs for the adults. **N.M.** ★★★ **[cartoonnetwork.com]**

GOTHAM GIRLS Warner Bros.' *Batman: The Animated Series* was a hit on TV among both adults and kids, thanks to its dark story lines and stylized animation. This Web-only spin-off, featuring bad girls Catwoman, Poison Ivy, and Harley Quinn, shares the TV show's beautiful art deco look (here dubbed Dark Deco) but keeps the content light enough for the kiddies. **M.G.** ★★★ **[warnerbros.com/web/gothamgirls/cartoons.jsp]**

THE CONTENT COMMITTEE: MEGAN GERRITY, NAN MOONEY

MON **HARDBALL WITH CHRIS MATTHEWS:** 2 P.M. LAST CHANCE TO CHAT POLITICS **[MSNBC.COM/CHAT]**

TUE **OPRAH'S BOOK CLUB CHAT:** 9 P.M. TALK QUEEN'S FAVES **[OPRAH.COM/COM/CHAT/COM_CHAT_MAIN.HTML]**

WED **COLDCUT:** 4 P.M. BRITISH DJs SPIN YOUR HARD DRIVE **[PIRATETV.NET]**

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: PIERRE VINET/NEW LINE CINEMA; GOTHAM GIRLS: ™ & © 2001 WARNER BROS./DC COMICS 2001

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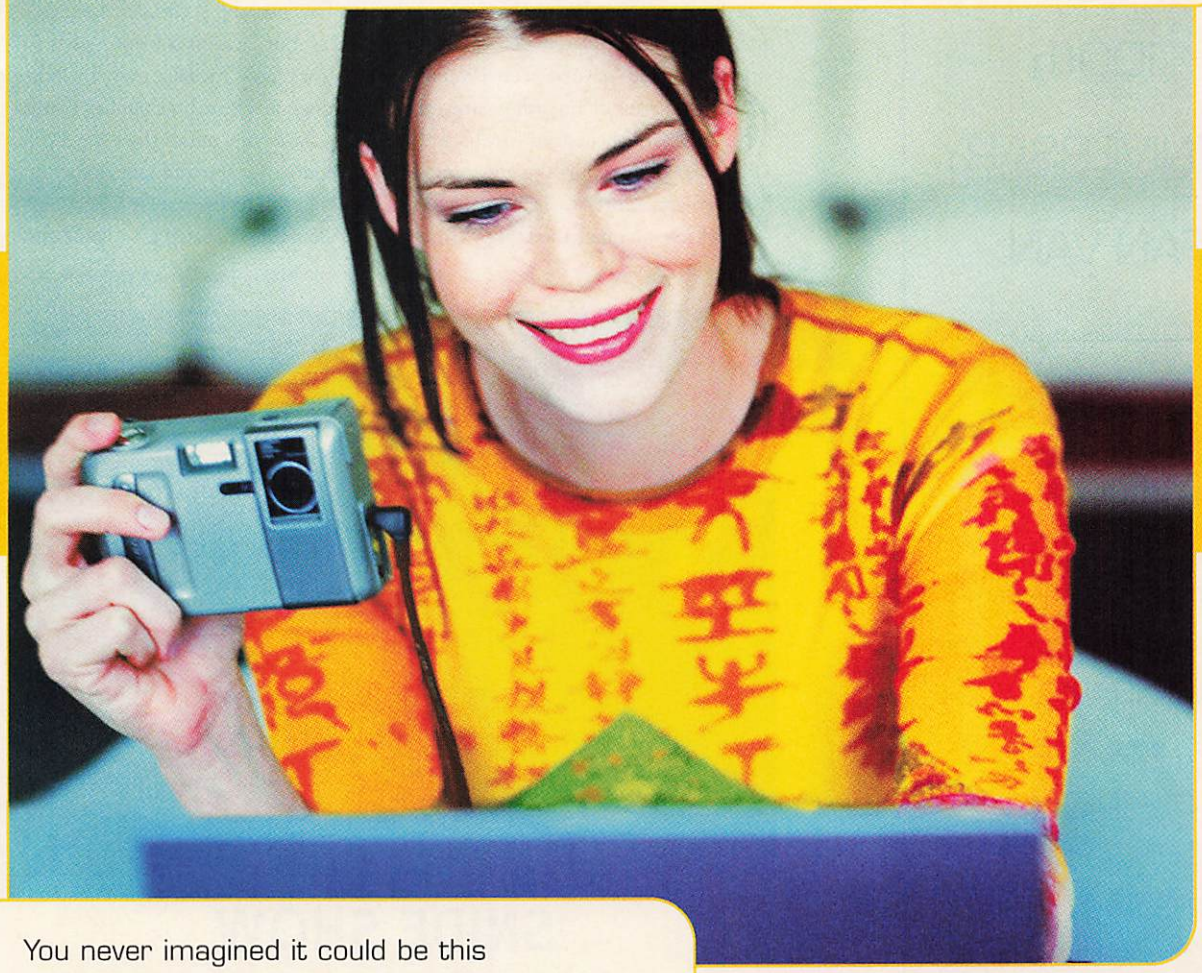

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Ford RACING 1901 100 2001 Years

For rules and regulations turn to page 105.

creations. Usenet groups such as **[rec.arts.books.tolkien]** and **[alt.fan.tolkien]** feature discussions on everything from alternate cast lists to goofy parodies.

But while the depth of the online *LOTR* fan base would be a major boon to any movie, it also points to one of the major dilemmas that director Peter Jackson faces—one that Lucasfilm doesn't. No matter what the fans may think, the *Star Wars* story and its sequels ultimately belong to George Lucas. But Jackson is working with a story aficionados have been envisioning privately for years. One false move by Jackson and the cries of anguish will reverberate throughout the echo chamber that is the Net. That may explain why he and the studio have gone out of their way, both online and off, to court the fan community. Of course, for the ultimate verdict on his cinematic efforts, we'll all have to wait for the films to finally appear. Good luck, Mr. Jackson, and may the fanboys smile on you. **[lordoftherings.net]** **BILGE EBIRI**

Music

SNIDE SHOW

The Digital Club Network brings underground rockers into the spotlight

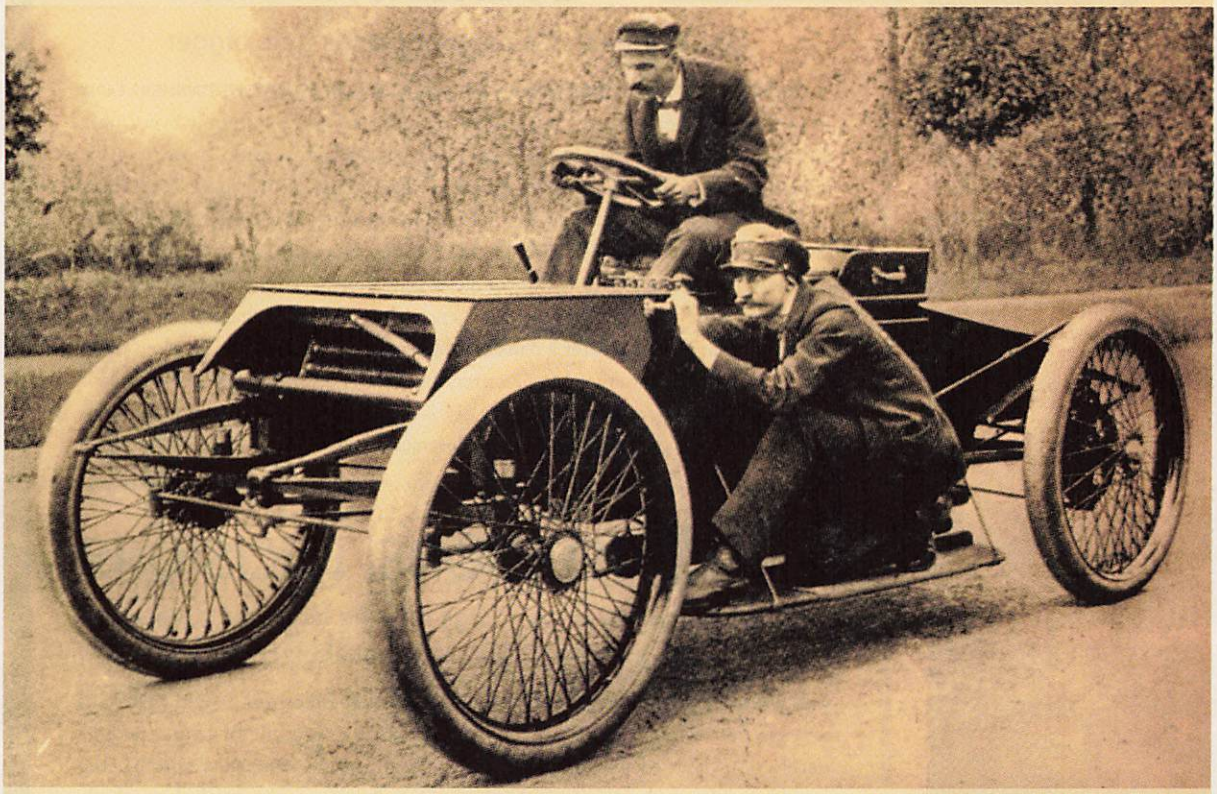
INTIMACY IS OVERRATED. THAT'S CERTAINLY THE subtext of the high-lonesome ex-punks in Clem Snide, who wander onstage to wryly howl lost souls' tragic tales. It's also the theme of the DCN: Digital Club Network, which spares you the sweat and smoke of the actual dive circuit while preserving your chance at the private joy of digging for the undiscovered. The archives of multiple concerts from single tours allow connoisseurs to compare and contrast, from the comfort of their own computer nooks, musician moods on varying days. Superfan completism is served by links to band sites, pithy bios, interviews, and such oddities as two solo stands from Snide front man Eef Barzelay. And since it seems DCN's welcome surveillance cams are everywhere, if cowboy irony isn't your idea of a hot night in, choose among more than 4,000 other performances in 23 idiosyncratic indie genres. Surf around, playing whatever-happened-to and who-the-hell-was-that, and have fun exploring the irreconcilable differences between the Most Popular and DCN Recommends menus. **[dcn.com]** **ADAM McGOVERN**

THU **AXECALIBER:** 10 P.M. IT'S ALL ABOUT THE GUITAR **[MODERNMUSICANDMORE.COM/REALAUDIO.HTML]**

FRI **THE N.E.W. SHOW:** 5 P.M. TOMORROW'S FINANCIAL HEADLINES, TODAY **[CNNFN.CNN.COM/COMMUNITY/CHAT.HTML?FRI]**

CLEM SNIDE: CHRIS BUCK

On October 10, 1901, Henry Ford and Alexander Winton tangled in a historic auto race. Henry's winning speed, a blistering 44.8 mph, mesmerized the 7,000 in attendance.



Log on to the legend of Ford Racing at www.fordracing.com

the race that changed everything.

He wasn't exactly the picture of a race car driver on that mild, partly cloudy October afternoon 100 years ago. And for good reason. He *wasn't* one. Henry Ford was an engineer who saw the automobile as much more than a rich man's toy, and who dreamed of a nation that ran on gasoline instead of oats. He also saw auto racing as a means to jump-start that dream. So, with little preparation and even less caution, he lined up against acclaimed champion Alexander Winton. And, although he was giving up 44 horsepower to the veteran driver, he managed to stay pretty close until Winton's engine faltered in the seventh lap. Henry sprinted home for the win, a victory which turned a lot of heads, including those of the financial backers who set his dream in motion. "The race" launched the career of the man who would personally hold 161 automotive patents, whose assembly line would revolutionize manufacturing, and who would deliver the Model T, the phenomenon that would quite literally put the country, and much of the world, on wheels. And while America has changed profoundly since "the race," the passion with which we race, research and build vehicles, a passion inherited from Henry Ford himself, remains *un*changed.

Ford RACING 1901 100 2001 Years

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Games

EVEREXPANDING

One of the Web's biggest games gets bigger

"IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME" MUST BE THE MANTRA AT SONY ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT. EARLY December will see the launch of a third expansion pack for online-only EverQuest, the wildly successful massively multiplayer role-playing fantasy game. Close to a half-million gamers currently pay $10 a month to "live" in this virtual space. EverQuest: Shadows of Luclin will take players to a satellite hovering above the world of Norrath. Luclin is divided into a land of light (ruled by Discord) and a land of shadow (ruled by Order). Each side of this conflict is spawning new items to buy, trade, and sell, as well as new quests, new spells, and a new race of playable characters.

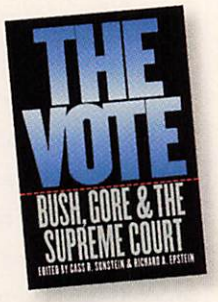
This expansion will offer a considerable graphic overhaul, adding even more detail to the game's innumerable characters and vast landscapes. The CD will sell for less than $30, but the original EverQuest disc is required for play ($10 or so in the store, with a free month of gameplay included). **[everquest.com/luclin]** **MARC SALTZMAN**

Books

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

A scholarly new e-book digs into the legal controversy behind the 2000 presidential election

WHAT WAS PARTICULARLY DISPIRITING ABOUT THE debacle that was last year's presidential election was the feeling that nobody on either side was being remotely objective. So anyone longing for impartial clarification might understandably turn to a recent e-publication, *The Vote: Bush, Gore, and the Supreme Court*, edited by Cass R. Sunstein and Richard A. Epstein, two law professors at the University of Chicago. It brings together 11 essays by the nation's leading figures in constitutional and electoral law, and you'd probably assume such distinguished scholars would rise above politics and cast their opinions in the pure light of reason.



But this turns out not to have been the case. While the essays approach the issues from every angle, they are still deeply political. As Sunstein sums up in his introduction, "There is, even among the academics represented here, a clear and sharp difference between Gore supporters, or left-of-center people, and Bush supporters, or right-of-center people: The former are generally skeptical of the Court's decision whereas the latter think, broadly speaking, that it was correct."

Sunstein explains this by hearkening back to a view associated with the "legal realist movement of the 1930s," which held that "the line between legal judgment and political judgment is far from crisp and simple." He continues: "At least where the legal materials leave gaps, people will do what they like, on political grounds." In other words, *The Vote* implies that by stepping into the process, the Supreme Court became blatantly political.

For anyone who cares about the checks and balances of the U.S. Constitution, this is more than a little depressing. So read *The Vote* for its legal reasoning, but know that its experts speak from opposite sides of the political divide. **[thevotebook.com]**

CHRISTOPHER LEHMANN-HAUPT

SAT **KALVOS & DAMIAN'S NEW MUSIC BAZAAR:** 2:30 P.M. CONNECTING NEW COMPOSERS WITH AUDIENCES **[KALVOS.ORG]**

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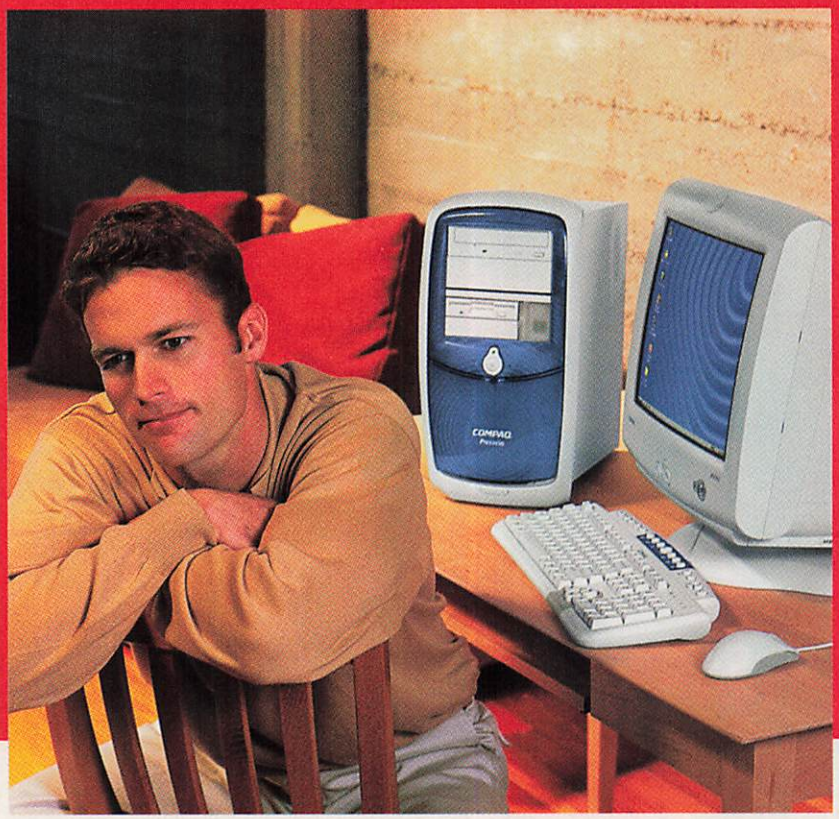

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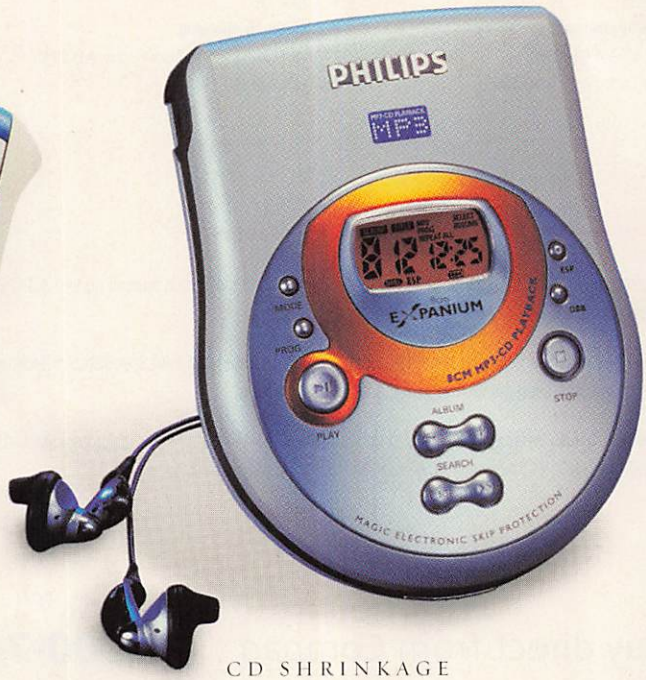

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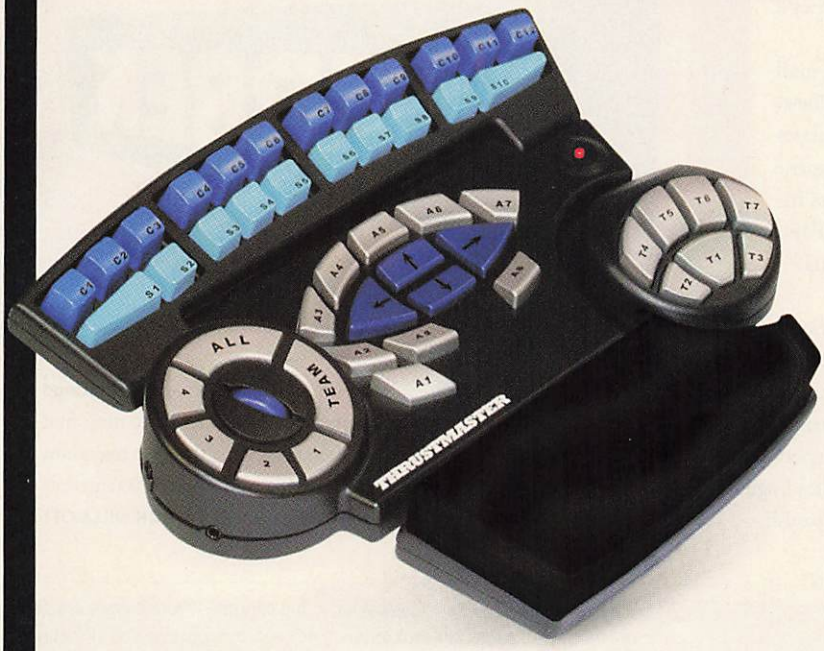
cool tools

by don willmott

FLAT SOUND

Home theater systems are great—unless your home doesn't happen to be the size of the local multiplex. In that case you need space-saving components, such as the **Pioneer HTZ-77DV system**. The sleek set of five small, flat speakers comes with a subwoofer and a digital readout component that perches on top of your TV. The DVD player can also play CDs and MP3 disks you've burned, and it has a radio, in case you feel like going analog. **$865 [pioneerelectronics.com]**



PRESS TO PLAY

If you're a hard-core gamer, take a close look—the **Thrustmaster Tacticalboard** has 42 buttons, all of which are programmable for your favorite games. Ergonomics is key: There are three adjustable components; 20 of the buttons are reachable without moving your wrist; and you can use the gel rest to give your carpal tunnels a break. Into multiplayer Net games? Use the built-in mike to scream at your opponents. **$70 [thrustmaster.com]**

KID CAMERAMAN

Intel's Play products have won plaudits from parents and educators alike. This holiday season the company releases **Digital Movie Creator**, a kid-size camera that can capture up to four minutes of footage (with sound) or 1,200 snapshots. Back at the PC, kids can use the included software to edit their films, add effects, titles, and sound clips, and then e-mail the finished masterpieces to friends and family. **$99 [shop-intel.com]**

webuser >

HOW TO GET THE MOST NET IN THE LEAST TIME

EDITED BY DON WILLMOTT

find it

HOW DO YOU SAY "FREE TRANSLATION SERVICES" IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE?

It's a big world out there, and most of it doesn't speak your language—though the English-dominated Net might lead you to believe otherwise. Instead of hitting the Back button every time you stumble onto a German Web page or fretting over how you'll communicate with that small Tuscan inn where you want to stay next summer, let the Net do some interpreting for you. Free translation services abound online, and while they might not pass muster at an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council, they'll certainly do the trick for simple communications.

For quick translations of individual words, e-mail messages, or entire Web pages, start with **AltaVista: Translate with Babel Fish [world.altavista.com]**, which translates English into eight languages—including Chinese, Japanese, and Korean if you have the appropriate fonts installed—and translates nine languages into English. Point it at a Portuguese or French newspaper site as a test, and—voilà—you'll see that it works quite well.

Many translation sites hoping to snare big international business clients offer some free tools to demonstrate their prowess. **FreeTranslation [www.freetranslation.com]** has fewer language pairs than Babel Fish, but it includes Norwegian and offers menus of special characters, so your messages will look perfect. Also worth a spin is **Systran [systransoft.com]**, which handles English to and from French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish.

For a mix of machine and human translation, try **WorldLingo [worldlingo.com]**. It translates from 10 languages and into nine, first providing a free translation and then suggesting that you may want to hire a human interpreter for fine-tuning, a good idea if you're dealing with business documents. Rates start at about $35. **DON WILLMOTT**

quick tips

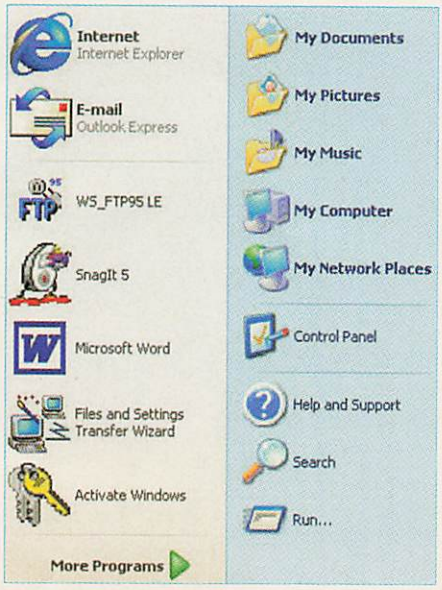
NETSCAPE'S SIX-PACK

Netscape has introduced **Navigator 6.1 [browsers.netscape.com]**, an update to its clunky 6.0 browser; all Netscape fans should install it. The new version's welcome enhancements include a simple-to-use download manager, several integrated search functions (e.g., a People Finder), and a Quick Launch option, which shortens the time it takes for the browser to load. Handling multiple e-mail accounts in Netscape Mail has never been easier, and Navigator 6.1 appears more stable than its predecessor; however, in our tests, Web pages still took longer to load in Navigator 6.1 than in Internet Explorer 5.*x*.

FILES BE GONE...FOREVER

You may think you've successfully deleted those sensitive and highly personal documents from your office computer, but you could be in for a big surprise. If your bosses are determined enough, they can probably still recover your files from your computer's hard drive. If you want to make sure your digital personal effects are really and truly obliterated, download and install the new **12Ghosts Shredder [12ghosts.com/ghosts/shredder.htm]**. The PC-only program is free to try and $14 to register.

WINDOWS XP: SHOULD YOU UPGRADE OR NOT? HERE ARE THE PROS AND CONS



XP's Start menu includes several new types of folders. The completely redesigned desktop (right) has a sleek, browserlike look and feel.

.01 upgrade because...

+ XP rarely crashes, having inherited core programming that has been used by airline reservation systems and banks. Your surly, two-reboots-a-day PC will suddenly be more robust.

+ Lots of little odds and ends make life more pleasant. The new interface is great-looking and evolves the classic folder metaphor. After more than 20 years, it can actually unzip ZIP files without add-on software. It's easier to open unknown file types and view image files. You can log in remotely from (or to) the office, or invite a troubleshooter aboard.

+ XP hides or humanizes such features as access rights and firewalls, which normal people shouldn't have to worry about (but do in the age of the Net). You won't need to be a network engineer to create a home network and connect it to the Net. Just follow the wizard.

+ XP may move videoconferencing and Net telephony into the mainstream. Both have faltered in the past on account of tough installation and unreliability. Now they're integrated into the OS and hooked to a powerful new chat system. The goal: to corral your various communications into a single interface.

.02 think twice if...

- You already use industrial-strength Windows 2000 or Windows NT. Your system is already stable.

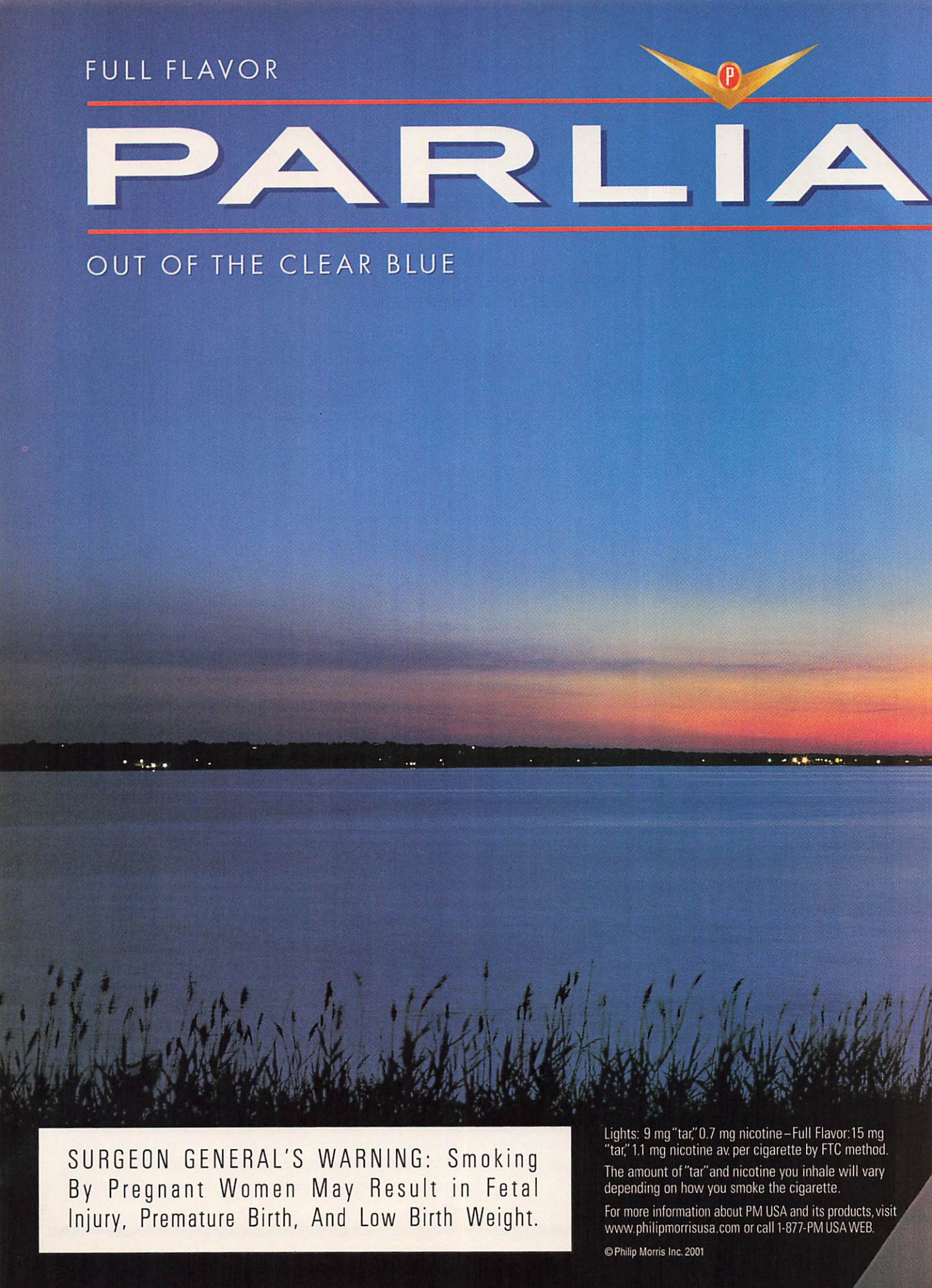
- Your PC and peripherals are old. XP may not be able to install all your accessories.

- Your PC is underpowered. Twenty percent or more of your processing power goes to XP overhead. Your system should have a 700MHz CPU (although Microsoft says 300MHz is enough; 233MHz is the minimum), 128MB of main memory (64MB is the minimum supported), and 1.5GB of free drive space.

- You fiddle with your PC a lot. Mandatory registration ties your copy of XP to your PC as it is. Change several components, and XP may think it's been copied to a different system—and stop working.

.03 the bottom line...

Improvements to the interface, performance, and functionality of Windows should outweigh any political concerns you have about Microsoft's alleged scheme for total Net domination. You should definitely get XP when you buy your next computer, and if your current PC has the power, you should be able to upgrade smoothly. The cost: $99. Of course, it makes sense to wait and see if early-bird upgraders flush out any problems. If your system is older and you're uncomfortable tweaking it and chasing down software fixes, you might as well wait until the next time you buy a computer. **LOU DOLINAR**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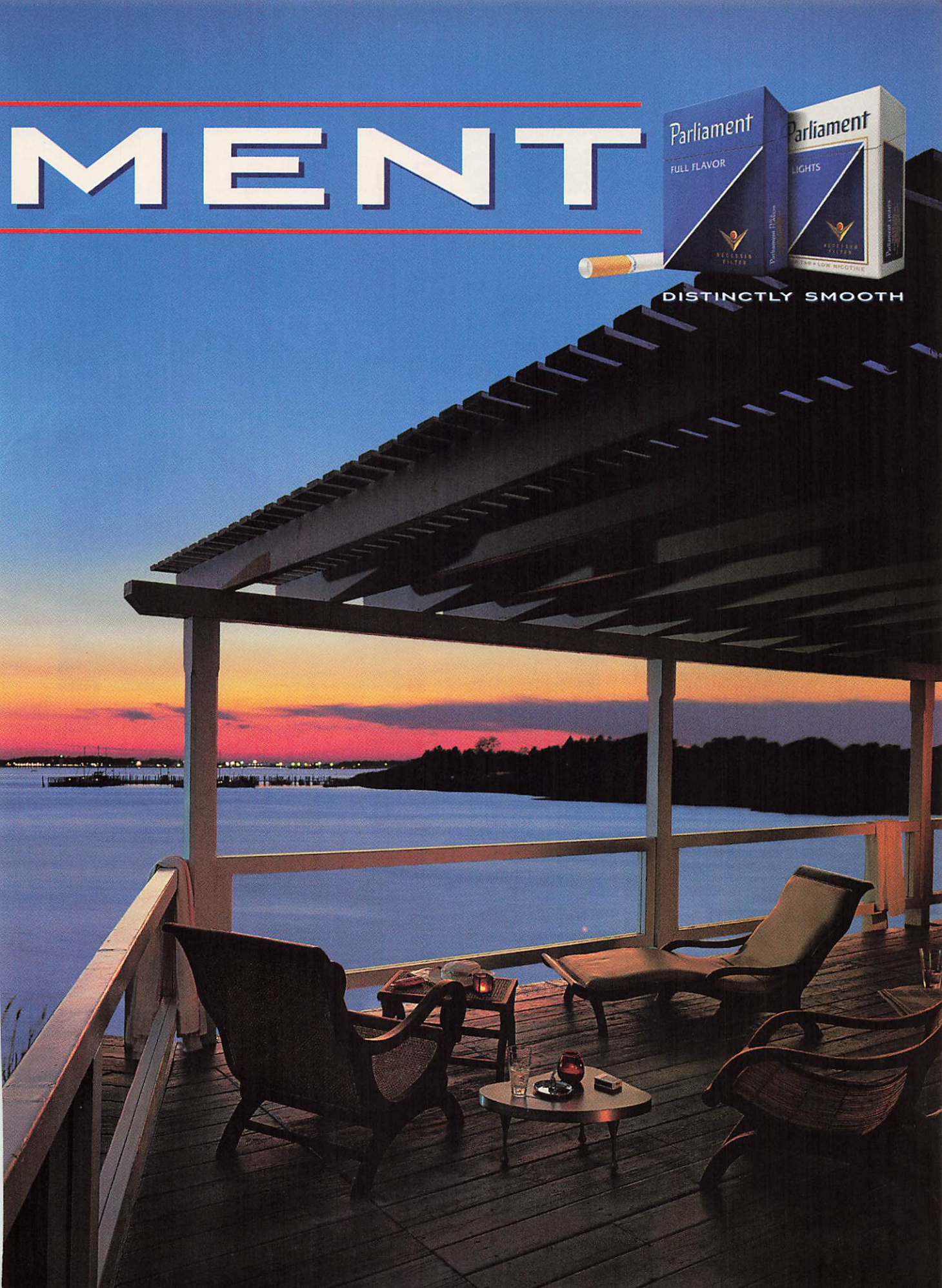
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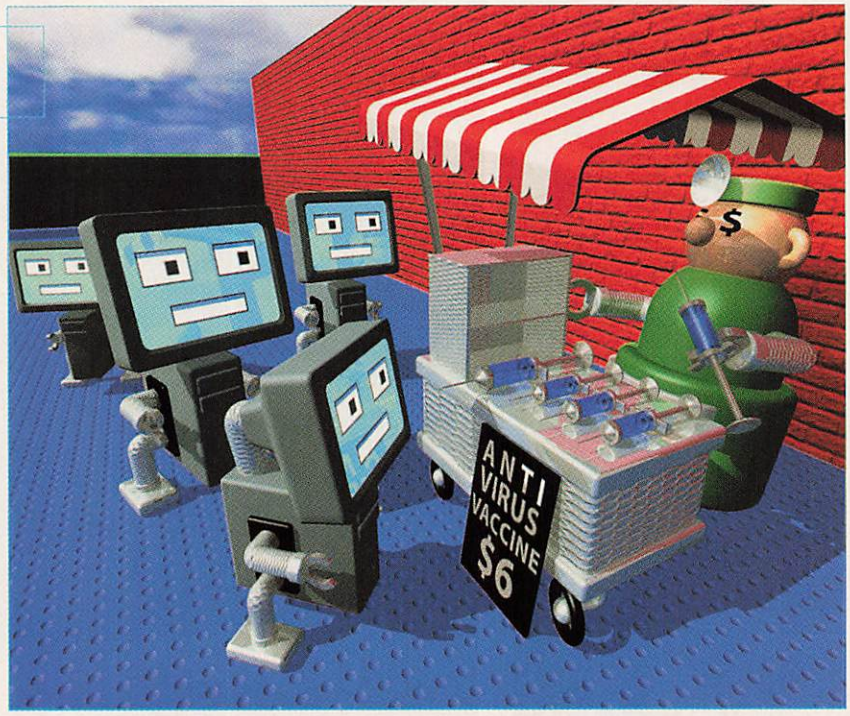
FIND SITES THAT LINK TO YOURS; SCAN FOR VIRUSES FOR FREE



Q» How can I find out which sites link to my Web site?

A» The quickest way to find sites that have connected themselves to yours is by clicking to **AltaVista [av.com]** and running a query that reads: "link: www.yourwebaddress.com." (Obviously, you'll want to use your own Web address. Also, don't use those quotation marks in your search.)

Sheer curiosity may drive you to use this service, but it can also be very useful for finding site owners with whom to swap free banner ads and links. By exchanging ads, you can increase your rankings in search engines and help curious surfers find their way to your site.

Those of you who already exchange ads with other sites should take a look at **Link-Spy.com**. This free Reciprocal Link Tracker keeps tabs on all the sites you've traded links with, and makes certain they're still linking to you.

Q» Two months ago you reported on free antivirus programs. It sounded too good to be true. Well, as it turns out, the programs aren't free anymore. Any other bright ideas?

A» Oooh, the sarcasm. Yes, it's true: The two programs we recommended, eSafe Desktop 3.0 and InoculateIt Personal Edition, are no longer available for free (in fact, InoculateIt is no longer available at all). Sorry, but I can't recommend any other quality antivirus programs that are offered without charge.

If you're concerned that your computer may have been infected with a virus, there are sites and programs that will scan your PC for free, but these services won't disinfect your system. For a free checkup, go to **Symantec Security Check [security2.norton.com]**, **McAfee.com VirusScan Online [mcafee.com/myapps/vso]**, or the **Panda ActiveScan Online Virus Check [pandasoftware.com/activescan/com]**. The free scanners require that your system be running Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, or ME, as well as Internet Explorer 4.0 or later for Panda, 4.5 or later for Symantec.

Also check out **Trend Micro HouseCall [housecall.antivirus.com]**, which works on PCs running Internet Explorer 4.*x* or later, or Netscape Navigator 3.01 or later.

You've heard this plenty of times before, but I'll say it once more: Every computer user should install and use antivirus software. Why take chances with your data? I recommend **Symantec Norton AntiVirus 2001 [symantec.com/nav]**, which costs a reasonable $39.95. But there are dozens of powerful solutions out there; to read the reviews at **CNET.com**, click through to Software Reviews: Utilities: Antivirus/Diagnostic/Filtering. And you'll find CNET user opinions at Downloads: Utilities: Antivirus.

EDDIE BOWEN/WWW.COSMO7.COM

aol watch

If you're having an impossible time getting through to an AOL representative by phone, hang up and turn to the Net. The service offers free online tech support at Keyword: Customer Service (24/7 for PC users; 8 A.M. to 3 A.M. ET for Mac users). Click the Get Live Online Help option and then either the Technical or Billing link. This will launch a new window; click the Go There button. This will launch yet another window—this time, a chatroom where you can receive assistance with account questions or technical problems.

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HUGHES

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ROGER EBERT ■ CRITICAL EYE

THE NET IN MOVIES: FUTURE SCHLOCK?

Hollywood approaches the Internet as the blind men of fable approached the elephant, assuming that each part of it represented the whole beast. In the movie *AntiTrust,* the Internet is the instrument by which a Bill Gatesian villain will control the economy. In countless thrillers, the Net supplies precisely the information the hero requires, instantly. One of the best definitions of the Web, if a limited one, is supplied by Ben Affleck playing himself in Kevin Smith's *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back.* Ben explains to Jay: "It's a place used the world over where people can come together to bitch about movies and share pornography."

The Japanese movie *Haru* is about an online relationship between two people who are too busy to meet real people. *You've Got Mail* explores how people reveal one facet of themselves online, another in the real world. Yet despite Hollywood's weekly production of movies about teenagers, there still hasn't been one based on instant messaging, which is the single greatest killer app in the universe as far as middle-school kids are concerned. (For more on IM in this issue, see "Inside Instant Messaging," page 108.)

Now comes *Thomas in Love,* a French film by Pierre-Paul Renders that projects the Net into the future. We never see the hero. We see only what he sees: his computer monitor. He's agoraphobic and hasn't left his apartment in eight years. He does everything online. The opening scene shows him having virtual sex with a cyberstewardess. Later he strikes out with a girl he meets through an online dating service, and then has an uneasy relationship with an online prostitute.

All of these forms of "sex" are better described as aids to masturbation, but in this brave new world there is at least a virtual form of mutual masturbation. Thomas and his dating partner Melodie don cybersex suits that allow them to manipulate each other's costumes over the Net, although she finds this creepy, and so would I. Imagine wearing a suit that might suddenly grab the wrong bit. You'd want it to be a very, very accurate fit.

I don't know how many years in the future *Thomas in Love* is set. A lot of it looks familiar, as if furniture built this year is still in use. Other details, such as moving tattoos, are harder to place. What struck me, however, was that this future Internet isn't much more advanced than the one we have right now. With enough bandwidth, any of us could approximate Thomas's private life (not that we would want to). Even a remote-control form of cybersex exists, although I don't want to think about it, and you don't want to know about it.

Thomas in Love is too long and not very good. I wrote in my review: "Our only consolation is that it's better to see what Thomas sees for 97 minutes than to see Thomas." But what got me thinking, after the movie, was how much the movie's Internet of the future resembles the Internet of today.

Few movies anticipated the Internet, and now few seem able to reinvent it. (One that did was *The Matrix,* with its vision of a future world in which all humans are cyberconnected to an unknown underlying reality. That was pure science fiction, not a reasonable extrapolation.)

Why do films do such a bad job of depicting the Internet of today and imagining the Internet of tomorrow? Hollywood has created a fantasy Net

Why do films do such a bad job of (1) depicting the Internet of today, and (2) imagining the Internet of tomorrow? They do a bad job with the existing Internet because they don't trust the audience to know much about it. These movies, especially the big-budget action pictures, have to play all over the world, and the filmmakers know that even in America almost 50 percent of the population isn't online. So Hollywood has created a fantasy Net that exists only in the movies: It features lavishly animated e-mail messages, never requires searches, and beeps with every keystroke.

Why can't the movies invent a more interesting and advanced Internet of tomorrow? This question answers itself. If they could, they've have done more than make a movie, they'd have dreamed up the next killer app. Everybody wants to know how the Net will evolve, what the browsers of the future will do, what new online wonders will be devised. When we do find out, though, I guarantee it won't be in a movie. ■

PAUL ELLEDGE

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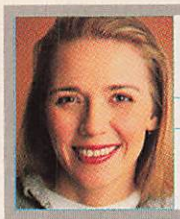


ANGELA GUNN

NET ETHICS

SPEECH AND SAFETY: A FRAGILE BALANCE

Q: After the World Trade Center and Pentagon terrorist attacks, some Internet service providers gave investigators access to users' data. Under normal circumstances I'd object to this erosion of online privacy, but in these difficult times I'm not so sure. How do ethics survive a crisis?

A: Ben Franklin provides us with a harsh yardstick: "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Setting precedents when the earth is shaking is a dangerous business, and there's a reason privacy advocates refer to any lessening of rights as erosion: Once you lose a little, you're in danger of losing a lot.

As I write, the FBI has been offering to install the mass-surveillance system formerly known as Carnivore at ISPs such as AOL and EarthLink. The government won't say how it works exactly, but they assure us that they'd *never* abuse it, and that using it would help them stop the next would-be attack. The services responded with an ethical compromise: They would pull requested data off their systems, but they'd use their own tech to do so.

In these difficult times, there are those who will, with the best of intentions, press for diminution of our rights to prevent another tragedy. Days after the ISPs cooperated with authorities, the U.S. Congress hysterically passed legislation allowing much broader use of monitoring technology—even allowing law enforcement to use it without a judge's order. It will only get worse, unless we impress on our legislators that burning the Constitution is no way to save it.

Days after the ISPs cooperated with authorities, the U.S. Congress hysterically passed legislation allowing much broader use of monitoring technology

Compromise—forgive us, Ben—is necessary. A code of ethics so rigid as to not allow compromise in extraordinary circumstances is destined to break, or to lead to the kind of extremism that birthed these attacks. Equally necessary are parameters to limit compromise, seawalls against erosion of the rights that make America worth defending. Ethically, these ISPs acted as patriots. Now all we have to do is convince the government to stop treating them like potential traitors.

Remember this: The bastards used Bronze Age tools to hijack those planes. Heroism and cell phones prevented even greater carnage that day, and the Web proved an important tool for holding together our momentarily fragile national psyche. Using technology to subvert the freedoms technology has built and helped protect is an insult to our country and to ethical Net citizens everywhere. And speaking of insults...

Q: What do you think of this?

A: Following this question was appended the screed Jerry Falwell belched forth after the attack. This little gem blamed, in no particular order, feminists, liberals, pro-choice thinkers, gays, lesbians, pagans, and the ACLU, claiming that they had "helped this happen" and that "God will not be mocked." America, Falwell said, brought this on itself for not thinking like Falwell. Thanks to the magic of e-mail—possibly the freest speech of all—Falwell's fractious phrases raced around the world within hours, allowing for instant reactions from a truly global audience. For the most part, I'm happy to report, people generally seemed horrified.

Like the terrorists who did this, Falwell is willing to trivialize mass murder to advance his extremist views. Like the terrorists who did this, his grip on logic is tenuous enough to ascribe those views to a God of love and tolerance. Like the terrorists who did this, he wussed out when asked to claim responsibility for his deed, issuing a whiny disclaimer to CNN.

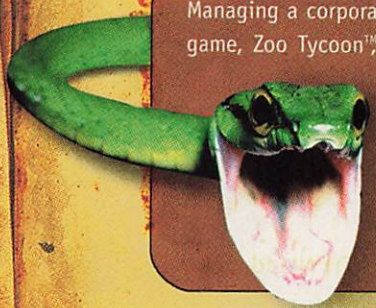
The difference between Falwell and the terrorists? Not religious extremism, not the desire to legislate morality, not hateful intent. Only degree.

I support Falwell's freedom of speech, even if he doesn't support mine. Not to support it would lead us to a place where the faces of Falwell, Osama bin Laden, and others like them are indistinguishable through the flames. ■

Right? Wrong? Write: angela_gunn@ziffdavis.com

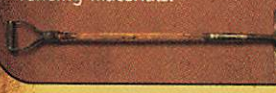
JAY GULLIXSON

IT'S LIKE RUNNING ANY OTHER BUSINESS. EXCEPT THE SNAKES ARE EASIER TO RECOGNIZE.



Managing a corporation isn't easy, but in the new PC game, Zoo Tycoon™, at least you know you're dealing with animals. Over 40 species in fact. Each with its own characteristics, habitat and needs. Hire zookeepers to help you care for them. That'll free you up to look after your guests — and profits.

EVERY ORGANIZATION HAS EMPLOYEES THAT MONKEY AROUND.
For kicks your gorillas will throw poop at your guests. Those silly pranksters. Cage them properly by choosing one of 12 fencing materials.

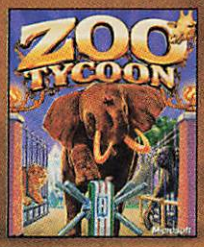


SOME SNAKES ARE MORE POISONOUS THAN OTHERS.
They're sneaky, slimy and they reside in your House of Reptiles. Other buildings you'll put in your zoo include gift shops, hamburger stands and compost buildings. If you actually want to sell burgers, think twice about putting the burger stands next to the compost buildings.

THE WEAK ARE ALWAYS PREYED UPON.
Poor gazelles. Always eaten alive. But that happens when you're at the bottom of the corporate food chain. Keep them away from the lions' cage, unless your big cats deserve a 5-star meal.

WATCH OUT FOR THE SCAVENGERS AT THE BOTTOM.
Hyenas have no morals. But, these heartless beasts are easier to control in their home, the African grasslands. Build them a habitat where they can thrive off the land and feel at home by using over 175 exhibit and zoo-building materials.

Office politics are only one part of Zoo Tycoon. For more info on other facets of the game, go to microsoft.com/games/zootycoon



EVERYONE E MILD VIOLENCE CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

BLUE FANG GAMES

Microsoft microsoft.com/games/zootycoon

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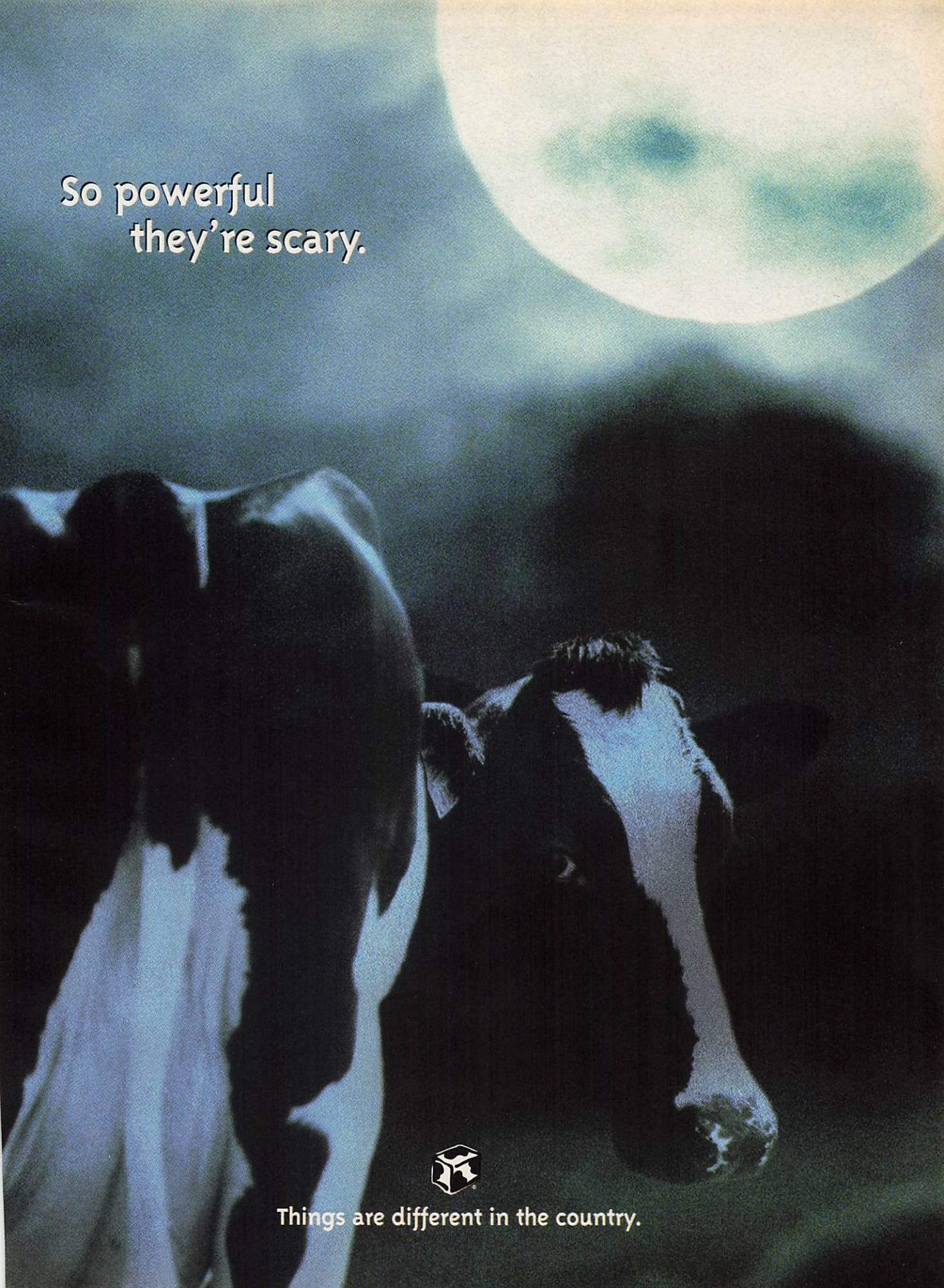
So powerful
they're scary.
Things are different in the country.

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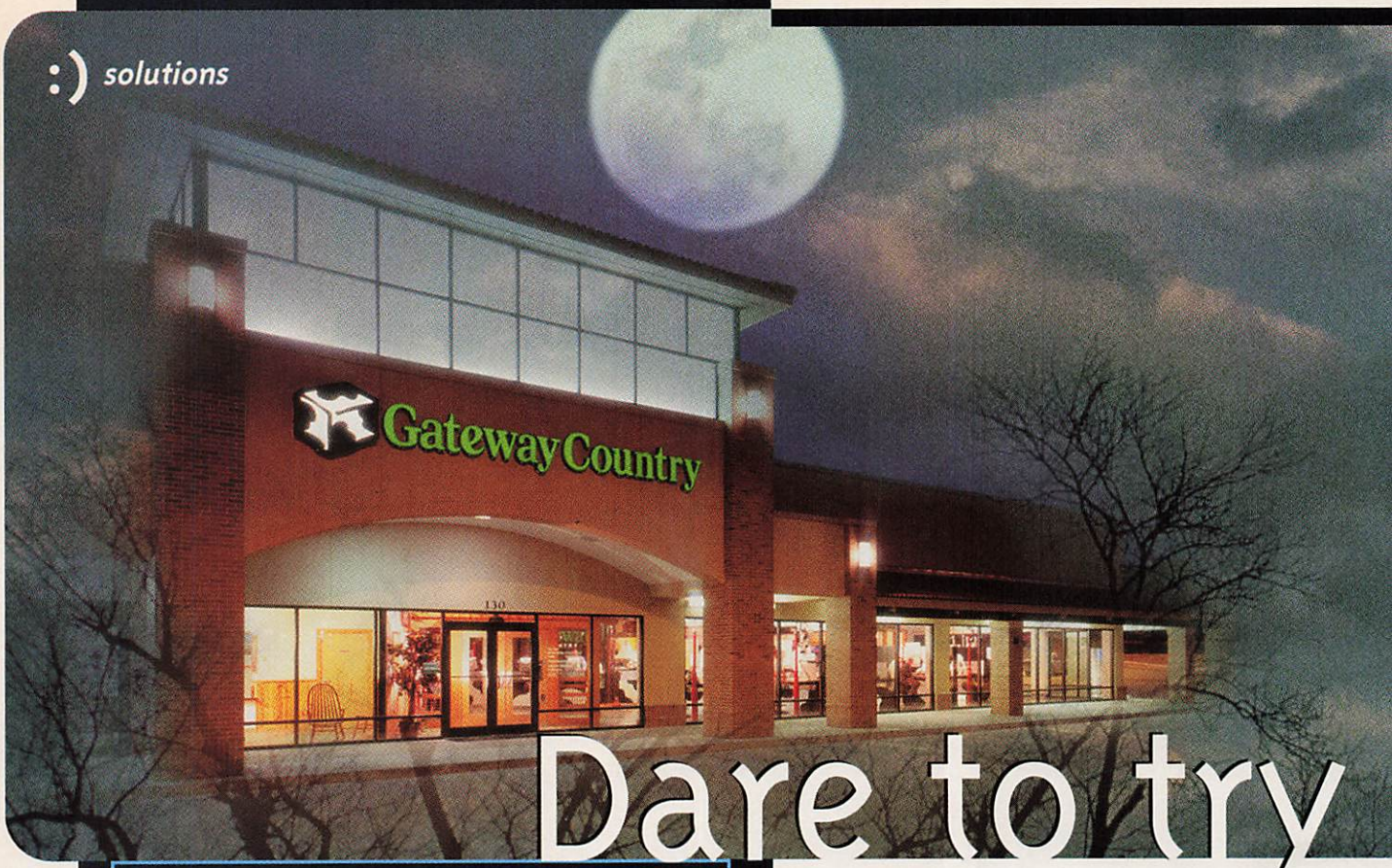

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1. Maximum data transfer rate dependent upon variables including particular modems with which you are communicating, telephone lines, communications software and communications protocols.
2. Pocket Streets for Microsoft Windows CE requires Windows CE 2.0 or later. Hardware available separately.
3. Certain Microsoft software product(s) included with this computer may use technological measures for copy protection. IN SUCH EVENT, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO USE THE PRODUCT IF YOU DO NOT FULLY COMPLY WITH THE PRODUCT ACTIVATION PROCEDURES. Product activation procedures and Microsoft's privacy policy will be detailed during initial launch of the product, or upon certain reinstallations of the software product(s) or reconfigurations of the computer, and may be completed by Internet or telephone (toll charges may apply).
4. TO AVOID BEING CHARGED A MONTHLY FEE, CANCEL BEFORE ONE-YEAR PERIOD ENDS. One-year period begins 30 days from receipt of system. You may incur surcharges even during promotional period for premium services, or long distance charges on your phone bill, depending on location and calling plan. Communication surcharges may also apply with some access numbers and in AK. **For details and access numbers call1-800-846-2000.** Check with your local phone company to determine whether the access number you select is a local call for your calling plan. New U.S. members 18 and older only. Major credit card or checking account required. Use may be limited, especially during peak usage.

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Digital Audio Creator Pack

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- Training Course, "Using Your PC to Explore Digital Music *Your Way*"[7]
- Getting Started Guide

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- Boston Acoustics® 735™ Digital Speakers
- 56K[1] Modem
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THE NET BECOMES A Life line

THE MAIL
THE CHOICES
THE IMPRESSIONS
THE FOUNDATION
THE BOARDS
THE PLOT
THE WORLD
THE HEART
THE FUTURE

From e-mail to message boards, on home pages and distant Web sites, people linked up as never before. A tragedy and its aftermath, in Net time

Re: Are You OK?

On September 11, it seemed as if everyone in the world was either in New York or trying to reach someone there. On that day, checking your e-mail was a matter of life and death

By 8:45 a.m. on September 11, I'm sitting in my apartment and already dreading the day ahead: a meeting I'm not prepared for, coworkers e-mailing me with the day's fresh woes, a lunch date I need to cancel—again. As mornings for Manhattanites go, this one's par for the course: stressful, complex. Then I hear the news: Seven miles away, a Boeing 767 has crashed into the World Trade Center—an event too horrific to register. Maybe that's why I go on almost robotically with my business.

Ten minutes later, the first of many questions about my well-being arrives, from Cousin Bev in suburban New Jersey: "How far are you from there? Are you at work? Please tell me you're safe."

To my family—and probably most of the world—Manhattan is an exceedingly small landmass. That said, it may be hard to comprehend that I'm more likely to see the World Trade Center from a jet arriving or departing New York than I am to be visiting it. I write, then delete my first response, a diatribe about the uptown-downtown divide. I try again: "I'm fine. Both the apartment and my office are far from the WTC, so no worries. How are you?"

Then another jet takes aim at the second tower. It quickly becomes apparent that these are not accidents. Professional instinct sends me immediately to chatrooms and message boards to record the initial reactions, but nothing much is there yet. I hear my in-box ding with new mail as I make my way to the remote in time to watch one tower inconceivably, surreally, crumble. Twenty minutes later, the second tower follows. It looks as if I'll be missing that meeting, and probably more to come.

I want to sift the latest facts from news sites, get some of that fabled up-to-the-minute in-depth coverage we've written about so much. But the Web fails me. MSNBC has yet to strip down its graphics for faster access. CNN.com and ABCNews.com are simply inaccessible, and even if I could have gotten on, I wouldn't have found the answers I was looking for: who did this, and whether life would ever get back to the mundane complexity of cranky coworkers and broken lunch dates. While the Net failed me on

X BY RON BEL BRUNO

the big news in those first moments, it performed like a pro in terms of a minor and practically unreported item: I was alive. As it happened, a lot of people wanted to know.

My regular band of far-flung correspondents, such as Cousin Remo in southern Italy, make up much of the first wave of messages: "In this moment I'm watching on TV. Our prayers go to you and the family. I have no words to continue." My friend Alberto, in Florence, Italy, doesn't hesitate to show emotion: "Ron, I am a lot preoccupied for you! Are you near to the danger? Please send me your notices!"

E-mail preserved their distinctive voices and lent variety to what was becoming the only question I could definitively answer. My cousin Joe, a financial journalist in London, laces concern with his trademark black humor: "You just want to make sure the people you care about are okay. I mean, who knows, you might have been off on some dumb early shopping trip to Century 21 [a popular discount department store near the towers]." Bob, a politically intense college buddy living in Chile, ruminates: "I haven't felt this pit-of-the-stomach the-world-is-mad feeling since I caught you watching the Challenger explode over and over again. NOBODY is safe, but do you HAVE to live at ground zero? Is all that excitement and cutting-edge cultural capital crap worth your paying for the country's political screwups with YOUR life?" I'll get back to him with more nuanced responses later. For now a simple "yes" and "hmmm" will have to suffice.

Today my in-box is open to people whom yesterday I might not have welcomed there. Unfolding events shatter the mutually agreed-upon information blackout between me and an ex-romantic interest: "Hey, man...you OK? I felt like I wanted to say hello when I heard about this." Suddenly, I'm wondering if this makes him a better person than I might have thought a couple of hours ago. (Answer: Yes, slightly.)

My early responses reflect the level to which I've absorbed the day's events, which is to say, not much. "Yep, I'm fine. I live about seven miles from there, and all is safe uptown." I still cringe to admit it, but the sheer volume of concern leads me to cut and paste those two sentences more than a couple of times. Across the East River, the wind is carrying a scrap of letterhead from a WTC–based firm miles into Brooklyn, where a friend of mine—a lawyer consulting for that very firm—will find it half-burnt on his lawn. Uptown, where even the stench of inferno won't reach for another day, e-mail is the shield I have, protecting my friends and family from worry—and myself from total comprehension.

When my friend Denise, who works in midtown, writes, "You'd better make sure you have cash; the ATM lines are a nightmare down here," I venture offline and out. On the bank line, what starts out as a simple exchange of news among strangers becomes a political debate, thanks to the rant of an elderly woman casting a net of hate against "all Arabs." Yet as I walk back home, a merry band of preschoolers is skipping and tumbling down the sidewalk with a couple of nannies trailing behind; two stonemasons are busy restoring a broken-down stoop. Clear blue skies, laughing kids, and dead people I don't see: I'm becoming more confused and angry. I'm feeling isolated. My reality isn't meshing with what I see on TV.

I return home to a second wave of missives, this time from less frequent correspondents: a girl I used to tease in my eighth-grade algebra class, high school friends I haven't seen since my last reunion, professional colleagues. Many of these people are living far away and aren't quite sure where I'm working or dwelling in Manhattan after all these years, so they're justifiably rattled. Ironically (or perhaps just tellingly), I end up having a catharsis with these people—not the ones in town or on the phone, who are closer to my daily life. Timing is everything.

"I had a fight on the bank line that made me sick," I write to a woman I haven't laid eyes on since the Reagan era. I tell a college roommate about the "inspiring civility" of the Upper West Side supermarket crowd I just left, "...even as they busted open boxes of Perrier in the aisle and hoarded pasta and cornflakes." All this, I explain, because thousands of people have lost their lives seven miles down Broadway. As I review my own words, seven miles starts to sound like what it is: very, very close.

Unlike the day's many telephone conversations, which are punctuated by long periods of silence and repeated musings along the lines of "It sucks" and "I can't believe this is happening," my e-mails reflect the complexity of my sadness and uncertainty. My keystrokes are often hurried, but the words keep coming out, and they help. After this day, many of these correspondents will probably drop out of my in-box again for months or years. But right now, they're with me—and this is all that matters.

I, too, send many "Are you okays," which slowly find responses throughout the day. As the daze of the day continues, I shuttle between the TV in the living room and the computer screen in the bedroom: Television doles out the images; e-mail helps me process them as part of this new reality. An acquaintance temporarily out of town on that day will later say, "It seems I left in one life—my own, the city's, the world's—and came back in another." As the television announced the new world, its hour come at last, I gathered my e-mail and slouched toward it.

ROBERT CLARK/AURORA

Dropping Anchors

You made the mouse move. You made the choices. The Net offered something that TV didn't: a sense of control

Television helped us understand the scope of the September 11 catastrophe in remarkable ways. Its resources and reach were vast, its live images unforgettable. But as we divided our attention between the television and online landscapes, the basic difference between TV and the Net hit home as never before: When we watched TV, we depended on anchorpeople. When we used the Net, we *were* the anchorpeople.

The networks scrambled to feed us minute-by-minute reports, and we watched gratefully for hours on end. But for many of us, there was a downside. When it came to the information that interested us personally, we were forced to wait. We waited for Tom Brokaw to show us that graphic of the Twin Towers and the affected area again. We waited for Peter Jennings to tell us where to make our donations. We waited for Dan Rather to survey international reaction to the U.S. tragedy. They got to everything eventually, but with all the channel-flipping we were doing, we were never sure of what we might have missed.

Every day we take advantage of the fact that the Net doesn't make us wait. When we want a weather report or a theater ticket or a stock quote, we just go and get it. And so it was on September 11. We went and got what we needed, when we needed it. We wanted to know—immediately—which companies had offices in the towers. We wanted to see—right away—photos of the Pentagon. We were able to get our questions answered in the order in which they came to mind. And that was powerful.

The Net's other strengths came into play as well. In the days that followed, we could turn to *USA Today* for a gallery of interactive graphics **[usatoday.com/graphics/news/gra/gattack/index.html]**, and we could view them over and over until we understood. We could watch an astonishing time-lapse QuickTime movie of the collapse of the buildings at **Worldtrade [www.opvid.com/worldtrade/worldtrade.html]** and view it again and again until the reality of the destruction sank in. We could view the amateur video of the attack shot by a young couple from their Brooklyn apartment, and experience the immediacy of their stunned disbelief through their anguished cries in the background. Then we could forward the links to our friends.

We could also use the global reach of the Web to get intimately local. New Yorkers trapped out of town by grounded flights could log on for a comforting dose of hometown street-smart reporting from the New York **Daily News Online Edition [nydailynews.com]** or **NYPost.com**. Americans wondering how the Japanese were reacting to comparisons with Pearl Harbor could go right to the source and check **The Japan Times Online [www.japantimes.co.jp]**.

While citizens in any town could benefit from local Net-based information, New Yorkers in particular were in need of the kind of details that would help them navigate in a city suddenly missing important pieces of its infrastructure. As local TV and radio stations tried valiantly to keep everyone up-to-date, it was their Web sites, along with official city agency and relief sites, that answered our questions quickly, precisely, and on an as-needed basis.

We could also turn away from the major media outlets to add a personal dimension to our experience. The quirky and intimate world of online diaries and Weblogs cracked open an avalanche of eyewitness accounts and compelling photography. Sites like **East Coast/West Coast [eastwest.nu/blog.shtml]** and **The Fine Line [thefineline.org/tflblog]** helped us experience the events with an immediacy that was more personal than CNN's.

In the days following September 11, the news media was a relentless fire hose of information—the Net allowed us to dial that to any intensity we liked, from a trickle up to a full blast. And when we'd had enough, we could escape into a much-needed break with an online game of hearts with others who were similarly overwhelmed. At a time when many were experiencing a feeling of complete helplessness, the Net offered us something very important: a sense of control.

X BY DON WILLMOTT

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Impressions

Thousands of sites suddenly changed. Millions of people chatted, created, and commiserated. This is what it looked like

YOU ARE THERE

Witnesses turned to the Net to record impressions and share their photos. Andy Horwitz's 9:02 A.M. post [andyschest.com] was one of the first and most compelling eyewitness accounts, available online just minutes after the attack began.

oh my god! I'm NOT kidding!!!!

A plane just ran into the World Trade Center!!!

I was just turning on my computer at work in the Woolworth Building when we heard this enormous explosion. No one could tell what it was. Someone looked out the window and saw a gaping hole in the side of the WTC with black smoke billowing out. There may have been jumpers trying to get out of the fires. There's flames, smoke, the air is filled with debris: office stuff, papers, wall stuff....We thought it was a bomb. But the TV says it was a plane...

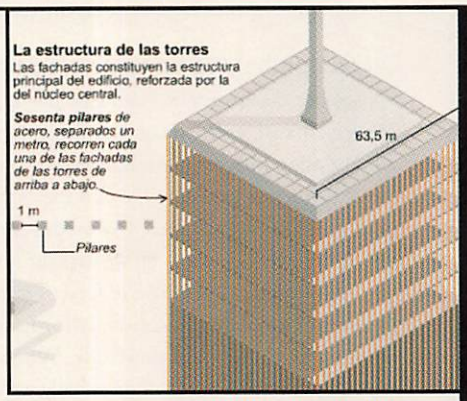
OH, MY GOD !!! THERE'S PEOPLE!!! people jumping out to escape the flames and falling hundred and hundreds of feet!!!!!!

FORWARD THINKING

No single item seemed to make the rounds faster than a piece written back in 1973 by Canadian radio broadcaster Gordon Sinclair to rally support for the U.S. and the American Red Cross, then nearly bankrupt.

I can name you 5,000 times when the Americans raced to the help of other people in trouble. Can you name me even one time when someone else raced to the Americans in trouble? I don't think there was outside help even during the San Francisco earthquake.

Our neighbors have faced it alone, and I am one Canadian who is damned tired of hearing them get kicked around. They will come out of this thing with their flag high. And when they do, they are entitled to thumb their nose at the lands that are gloating over their present troubles. I hope Canada is not one of those.



INTERACTIVE GRAPHICS, such as this one from Madrid's *El País* newspaper, helped Web users understand the disaster in ways that static images couldn't.

A LIVE NET VIEW of the World Trade Center was available from the not-quite-as-tall Empire State Building a few miles uptown. The south-facing live Web cams at its official site (esbnyc.com) brought the scope of the attack into raw relief.

- missing - **Richard Lynch** *12:38:54 09/12*
- Looking for Joe Riverso- Cantor Fitz - **Sa**
- missing person - **Deanna Galante** *12:37*
- Cantor Fitzgerald/ESpeed/Tradespark C
  - Re: Cantor Fitzgerald/ESpeed/Tra
- CANTOR&FITZGERALD MSN SUPPORT CO
- Tommy Knox - **janine brunetti** *12:37:03*
  - Re: Tommy Knox - **Mike McCandle**
- missing person - **debbie** *12:36:25 09/12*
- Wall Street Planning / MetLife 89th floor
- Missing - **Adriana Legro** *12:35:55 09/12*
- Cantor Fitzgerald - **Sari** *12:35:10 09/12*
  - Re: Cantor Fitzgerald-Brook Jackm

MESSAGE BOARDS such as this one at WNBC.com put a human face on the disaster as frantic friends and relatives looked for their missing loved ones.

SERIES OF WORLD TRADE CENTER PHOTOS: CYNTHIA MALARAN (MALARAN.COM/WTC)

THE VIEW FROM HERE

New York photographer Cynthia Malaran [malaran.com/wtc] writes: " I am still processing what occurred that dark day. I originally started this photo collection a few years ago as a tribute to the view from the bedroom window that I grew up with. Never did I imagine that one day I would be speaking of it in the past tense, at least not under these conditions."

USATODAY.COM quickly provided a number of smart, animated graphics. This screen shows a time-lapse view of the doomed planes' flight paths.

American Red Cross
Disaster Relief Fund

All of us at Amazon.com are deeply saddened by the recent tragedies in New York City, Washington, D.C., and southwestern Pennsylvania, and we extend our sympathies and condolences to those affected. You can support relief efforts by making a donation to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. You can contribute from $1 to $50--any donation is greatly appreciated. ALL donated money will go to the Red Cross to help victims of this and other tragedies.

Click here to find out how you can contribute.

FOR FIVE DAYS, Amazon.com devoted a large part of its home page to an appeal for Red Cross donations. It was an unprecedented charitable effort.

INTERACTIVE MAPS such as this one created by URHere.com made it easier for people to zero in on the rescue and relief information they needed most.

THE DEVIL IN YOUR IN-BOX? One of the most forwarded items after the attack has been this image, which purportedly shows the face of Satan in the smoke of the World Trade Center fire.

SATAN FACE: MARK D. PHILLIPS/SLPSTOCK

INSTANT DRAMA

While print magazines rushed to prepare special issues in a matter of days, Net-based outlets such as Salon [salon.com] presented fascinating reportage within hours. This dramatic account by David Boyle was reported by correspondent Ann Marsh.

David looks at his watch. He calculates that it will take at least an hour to inch down to the ground in the already crowded stairwells. He hits the elevator button. Doors open. People in the lobby around him shake their heads. David doesn't have time to explain: If the "accident" really is contained to Tower 1, he figures, the elevators [in Tower 2] should be fully functional. He and his colleagues get in with several others. Though they don't know it, a jetliner headed their way is about 60 seconds from impact as their elevator hovers on the 78th floor. A friend turns down David's request to accompany them. She wants to stay behind to watch over people. "I said, 'Well, good luck to you.' She's like, 'Good luck to you.' That's the last time I saw her. I remember all these faces looking at me as the half-empty elevator closed its doors on them...."

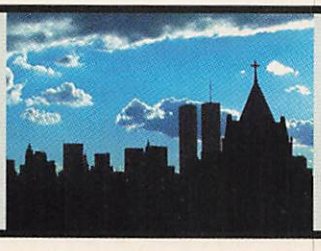
Back at his apartment, 11 blocks north of the World Trade Center, David looks at the smoldering buildings. As he watches, the first tower starts to collapse, killing, presumably, many of his former office mates. He can't quite register what he's seeing. Even as the building comes down, he turns his head to the left and watches the scene unfold simultaneously on the television, as if to verify his own impressions.

A MODEST PROPOSAL

In the days following the tragedy, pundits all across the political spectrum posted their opinions. Archconservative columnist Ann Coulter made her feelings known at National Review Online [nationalreview.com].

Airports scrupulously apply the same laughably ineffective airport harassment to Suzy Chapstick as to Muslim hijackers. It is preposterous to assume every passenger is a potential crazed homicidal maniac. We know who the homicidal maniacs are. They are the ones cheering and dancing right now.

We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren't punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top officers. We carpet-bombed German cities; we killed civilians. That's war. And this is war.



NOTES FROM ALL OVER

International reach has always been one of the Net's greatest strengths. Perspectives from any corner of the world, such as this September 17 editorial from *The Jerusalem Post*, wait just a few mouse clicks away.

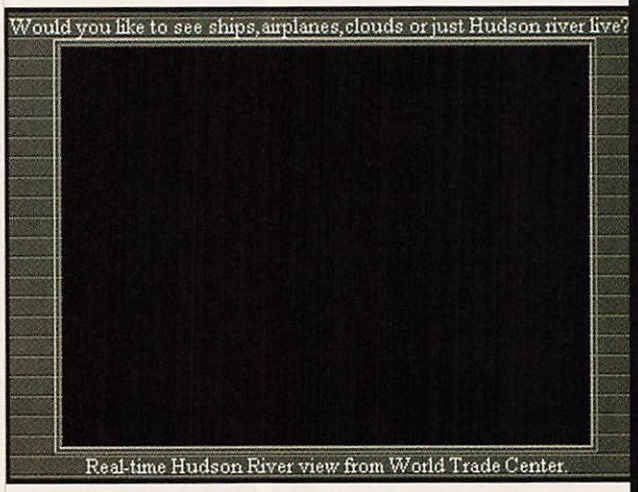
The overwhelming majority of Muslims are clearly not bloodthirsty fanatics. Thus the most effective way to fight the religious fanaticism that breeds such murderous terrorism is to seek to mobilize moderate, humane Muslims to repudiate their murderous co-religionists who bring shame on their supposedly common religion. After all, in the opening sura of the Koran, Allah is described as "el rahim, el rahman," the Compassionate and the Merciful.

In our joint fight against the terrorist international, which is today being fueled by Islamic fundamentalism, Israel and the U.S. must demand from the mainline leaders of their respective Muslim minorities to clearly make their choice, by identifying themselves and their followers with the common cause of humanity rather than with those who would distort Islam into a religion of mass murder.

THE PEOPLE SPEAK

Popular chatrooms were as chaotic as ever as members crowded in to vent and rant. It was business as usual in AOL's News, Sports & Finance chatroom 22.

Osucnamj: this is an act of war
LOCO241012: HOW MANY SAW THE PALESTINIANS DANCING IN THE STREET?
Lestat1055: yeeeehaw
Big3294will: mama said knock them out
LOCO241012: HUH
Osucnamj: i didn't see that
LOCO241012: IT WAS ON THE NEWS
Jerry4104: who ever did this will be punished but it will take a while to find out who did it.
Big3294will: im ready to fight
Osucnamj: i agree, let's get the tanks rolling
LOCO241012: the whole middle east should be nuked
GREENTWIST: i am a female college student & i collect guns. i am a lot more rational than you, lestat.
Osucnamj: we will show the world who and what we are made of



FROM ITS NEIGHBORING LOCATION just south of the towers, Internet marketing firm Kinya Inc. [kinya.com] shared its spectacular Hudson River view with Web cam viewers—until the morning of September 11.

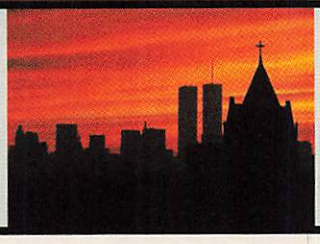
BY THE EVENING of September 11, this shocking photo, posted at Yahoo!, was the site's most-forwarded image.

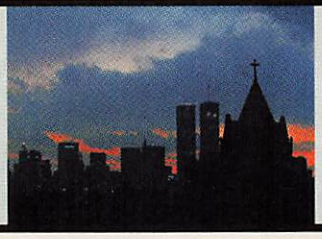
BOGUS NOSTRADAMUS QUOTES circulated quickly, revitalizing interest in the 16th-century seer. It was easy to predict that Amazon's best-seller list would soon look like this.

The Amazon.com 100
Updated Hourly!

1. Nostradamus
   by John Hogue
2. Twin Towers
   by Angus Kress Gillespie
3. The New Jackals
   by Simon Reeve
4. Nostradamus and His Prophecies
   by Nostradamus
5. The Secrets of Nostradamus
   by David Ovason

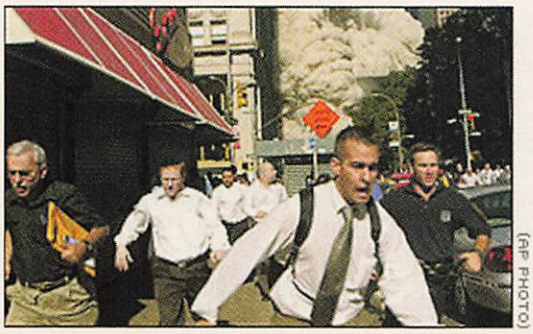
AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS





CNN.com

BREAKING NEWS



(AP PHOTO)

AMERICA UNDER ATTACK

At 8:45 a.m. EDT, the first of two airliners crashed into World Trade Center, opening a horrifying and apparen coordinated terrorist attack on the United States, whicl collapse of the two 110-story towers into surrounding Manhattan streets and a later attack on the Pentagon.
DEVELOPING STORY »

MANY NEWS ORGANIZATIONS, including CNN.com, slimmed down their top news pages, making them up to 90 percent lighter so that they would load faster. Photos like the one above, which load slowly, were used sparingly. At the same time, non-news sites such as ESPN.com switched to coverage of the disaster.

RobinCP
9/11/01 11:58

To all the Buddhas, Please help those who are sufferring as either a direct or indirect result of these horrific attacks and may all the merit I have collected in this and past lives be used to that end. Om mani padme hum.

RELIGION AND PRAYER sites were focal points for people seeking comfort. At Beliefnet (beliefnet.com), visitors of all faiths were asked to offer prayers.

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

SHARING BY THE SECOND

Visitors to Metafilter.com, an online diary to which anyone can add comments, found it useful to keep one eye on the TV and one eye on the computer screen as the tragedy unfolded.

Plane crashes into the World Trade Center. Apologies for not linking to anything besides the main CNN page but there are no full stories on this yet. The plane crashed into the building about six minutes ago, from what the TV is saying. We are about 60 blocks north and we can see the smoke over the skyline.
posted by karen at 5:58 A.M. PST (486 comments total)

I'm looking at it right now (we can see the WTC from our office) and it looks like a second plane just hit the second tower (we just saw it happen). I can't confirm it but it's absolutely crazy.
posted by TNLNYC at 6:06 A.M. PST on September 11

CNN now is reporting a second plane crash—one is a disaster, but two seems like it must be an attack to me...
posted by mikewas at 6:14 A.M. PST on September 11

This was no accident. No way.
posted by ColdChef at 6:15 A.M. PST on September 11

There's speculation that one of the planes was hijacked.... It gets worse every second.
posted by yupislyr at 6:17 A.M. PST on September 11

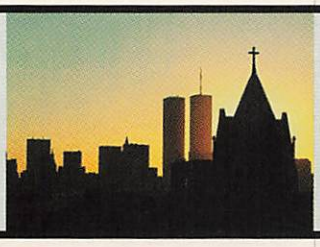
I'm not normally a praying man. But I'm praying right now.
posted by ColdChef at 6:27 A.M. PST on September 11

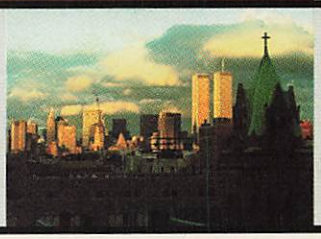
HACKERS AGAINST HACKING

The Germany-based Chaos Computer Club, an online organization of hackers, responded to an international call for Net sabotage.

As a reaction to the inconceivable murders in the U.S., an appeal to destroy Web sites and other communication systems linked to the Internet in Islamic countries or used by Islamic organizations is currently being passed around in the hackers scene.

The Chaos Computer Club strongly condemns this appeal and asks the public to ignore said appeal and similar ones. Being a galactic union of hackers, we simply cannot imagine to divide the world into good and bad at this moment.





SIGN OF THE TIMES

Sunday's *New York Times Magazine* had already been printed when disaster struck the preceding Tuesday. To remain timely, editors took the unprecedented step of posting an entire issue of relevant articles at The New York Times on the Web [nytimes.com] simultaneous to its Sept. 16 print edition. An article by Judith Shulevitz was among the featured content.

The desire for a collective purpose seems almost as great as the desire for a personal one. Indeed, if you ask people who have lived through periods of intense national challenge — veterans of World War II, of course, or of the Czechoslovakian Velvet Revolution — about the high points of their lives, you might conclude that they value their memories of struggle more than those of peace. There's nothing like being under attack to clarify what's important and to sweep away the nonsense on which we tend to squander our public attention: petty political squabbling, the enervating celebrity gossip.

INSIDE AFGHANISTAN

Afghan-American writer Tamim Ansary wrote a searing analysis of the current situation in Afghanistan. His eye-opening assessment, filled with vivid imagery, has inspired thousands to forward the essay.

The Taliban and Bin Laden are not Afghanistan. They're not even the government of Afghanistan. The Taliban are a cult of ignorant psychotics who captured Afghanistan in 1997 and have been holding the country in bondage ever since. Bin Laden is a political criminal with a master plan. When you think Taliban, think Nazis. When you think Bin Laden, think Hitler. And when you think "the people of Afghanistan" think "the Jews in the concentration camps." It's not only that the Afghan people had nothing to do with this atrocity. They were the first victims of the perpetrators....Some say, if that's the case, why don't the Afghans rise up and overthrow the Taliban themselves? The answer is, they're starved, exhausted, damaged, and incapacitated....In today's Afghanistan, only the Taliban eat, only they have the means to move around. They'd slip away and hide. (They have already, I hear.)

We come now to the question of bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age. Trouble with that scheme is, it's already been done. The Soviets took care of it. Make the Afghans suffer? They're already suffering.

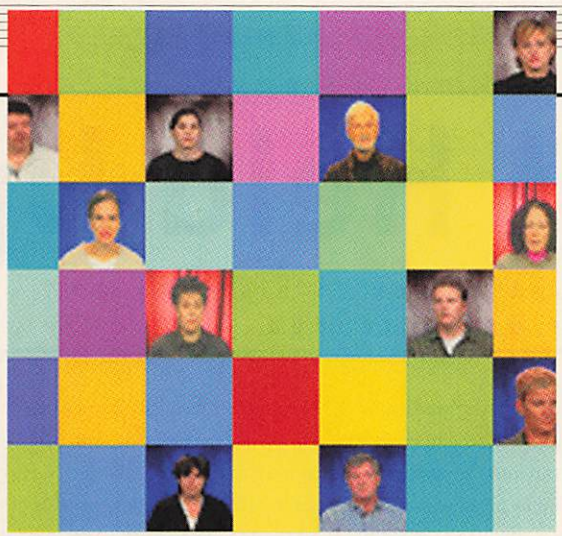
ARNOLD LIM, employee of FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY INTERNATIONAL (South Tower) Title: Programmer / Anaylst Desk located on 97th floor Last heard from Sept 11, 2001 at 8:50am (5 minutes after the first plane crash) Contents he might have with him: Silver ball chain necklace, yellow faced silver rolodex, dark brown tommy hilfiger wallet, dark brown leather shoes. Carries an orange grey Northface backpack, nokia cell phone and possibly a palm pilot. Description: MALE ASIAN (FILIPINO), 5'11", 180lb, short black hair, brown eyes and no scars. Please contact with any information to his whereabouts pre / post collapse of the World Trade Center

WITHIN HOURS OF THE DISASTER photos of missing victims flooded bulletin boards all around the Net, mirroring the heartrending posters and flyers that were taped to walls and phone booths all around New York City.

Pittsburgh, PA (PIT)	Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX (DFW)	Memphis, TN (MEM)
Port of Spain, Trinidad (POS)	Miami, FA (MIA)	San Juan, PR (SJU)
Quito, Ecuador (UIO)	Miami, FA (MIA)	Goma, Congo Dem Rep (GOM)
Richmond, VA (RIC)	Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX (DFW)	Little Rock, AR (LIT)
Rome, Italy (FCO)	Chicago, O'Hare,	London Heathrow,

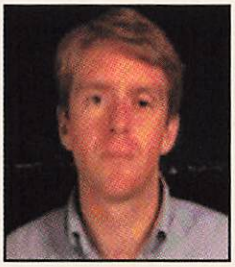
AS THE COUNTRY'S AIR TRANSPORT SYSTEM descended into chaos, airline sites tried to keep up with a flood of inquiries. This chart from American Airlines showed the extent of the confusion. Column one: the originating city. Column two: the final destination. Column three: the last-minute diversion.

SUDDENLY, even the most familiar sites looked different. The top banner at Yahoo! took on a new and urgent purpose.

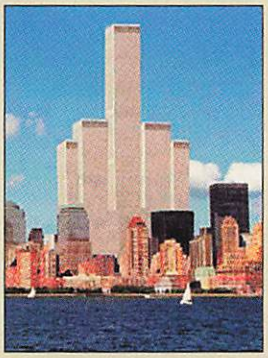


THE DIGITAL VIDEO QUILT, hosted by Red Zeppelin Digital [redzep.com], has given people a chance to share video tributes to the lost.

VIEWS FROM SPACE provided by satellite operators such as Spaceimaging.com show clearly the damage done to the Pentagon.



CNN'S NIC ROBERTSON was the only reporter to get images out of Afghanistan in the hours following the attack. How did he do it? With a $7,000, 10-pound, lunchbox-size TH-1 videophone. Attached to a satellite transmitter, it sends Webcam-like pictures anywhere. If power becomes a problem, the reporter can commandeer a nearby car battery.



AMATEUR ARCHITECTS couldn't resist making suggestions for possible World Trade Center rebuilding programs. Several variations on this "digital" theme are flying around the Net.

PENTAGON: AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

The vast radio network Clear Channel Communications circulated a list of 158 "lyrically questionable" songs to its radio stations and recommended they not be aired, at least in the short term. It has been forwarded all over by free-speech advocates who misinterpreted it as an outright ban, rather than an advisory.

AC/DC: "Safe in New York City"
Black Sabbath: "Sabbath Bloody Sabbath"
Steve Miller: "Jet Airliner"
Van Halen: "Jump"
Queen: "Another One Bites the Dust"
Pat Benatar: "Hit Me with Your Best Shot"
REM: "It's the End of the World as We Know It"
Talking Heads: "Burning Down the House"
Dave Matthews Band: "Crash Into Me"
Bangles: "Walk Like an Egyptian"
John Parr: "St. Elmo's Fire"
Kansas: "Dust in the Wind"
Louis Armstrong: "What a Wonderful World"
Frank Sinatra: "New York, New York"
Jackson Brown: "Doctor My Eyes"
Billy Joel: "Only the Good Die Young"
Sugar Ray: "Fly"
Steam: "Na Na Na Na Hey Hey"
Savage Garden: "Crash and Burn"

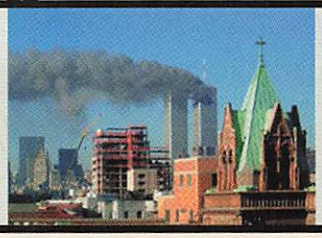
SEARCHING FOR WORDS

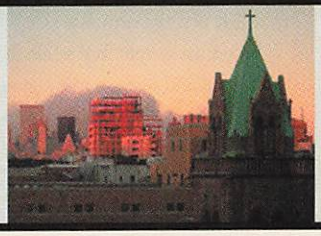
Personal publishing brought the disaster home in the most intimate way, and even professional writers struggled to express themselves.

I just want to cry, because I don't know what else to do. I have no wisdom. No words left. I'm just sad. All those people...**Jami Ann Attenberg [whatever-whenever.net]**

There are people walking up Broadway covered in white dust. Lower Manhattan is complete mayhem, but it's not fully hitting me yet. **Dante Woo [dantewoo.com]**

The sweet smell of burning plastic is lingering in my apartment. I don't think I'm happy with the new world. Can we have the old one back? **David F. Gallagher [lightningfield.com]**





How the Net Held Up

After the worst terrorist attack in history, the Internet worked as DoD intended

The World Trade Center's twin 110-story towers were designed to withstand gale-force winds and crushing impacts. The creators of the New York City landmark never envisioned it having to withstand 24,000 gallons of burning jet fuel. The Internet was designed as a redundant, self-healing communications network capable of surviving nuclear attack. Its creators never envisioned it having to handle hundreds of millions of simultaneous Web-page requests, video news streams, and instant messages.

Immediately following the attacks on September 11, 2001, the Net seemed about to buckle from an enormous traffic surge. Millions of panicked Americans logged on to pore over news reports about the carnage and e-mail family and friends who might have been in danger. From 9 A.M. to 10 A.M. EST, news sites such as **ABCNews.com**, **CNN.com**, and **The New York Times on the Web [nytimes.com]** experienced a meltdown, while the response time at **USA Today [usatoday.com]** and **MSNBC [msnbc.com]** slowed to a crawl. Even government Web sites were brought to a standstill: After Attorney General John Ashcroft appeared on live television and announced that the **IFCC: Internet Fraud Complaint Center [www.ifccfbi.gov]** would accept tips on the terrorist attack, the site was hobbled by a flood of well-meaning surfers.

What's more, the Trade Center had housed high-speed switches and servers for Verizon Wireless, WorldCom, and Sprint Corporation in its basement—a basement that was suddenly buried under more than a million tons of rubble.

By 10:15 A.M. EST, overall Internet performance was slowed to an extraordinary degree, according to Keynote Systems spokeswoman Mary Lindsay. **Yahoo! News [news.yahoo.com]** served 40 times its usual number of pages in those first two hours; AOL set a record by facilitating more than 1.2 billion instant messages that day. "During the Clinton scandal and the release of the Starr Report and during Election 2000, the performance of news sites was affected by an unusual amount of traffic, but we've never seen anything so startling as this," says Lindsay. "What happened on September 11, 2001, was of such magnitude that I'm not sure any site could have prepared for it."

It was the ultimate stress test of the 21st century's emergency broadcast system. But while the Net may have bent, it did not break. E-mail and instant-messaging services were largely uninterrupted, according to Vint Cerf, one of the principal scientists behind ARPANET, the precursor to the Internet. "Of course, if you were trying to reach the Internet backbone on dial-up," he adds, "you may have run into the same problems as voice calls." Ultimately, the Net fulfilled its promise as a communications lifeline in a time of crisis; in fact, with phone service into the New York area spotty at best, for many surfers it was the only means they had of reaching loved ones.

Even those news sites that were caught flat-footed by the unexpected deluge of Internet traffic managed to recover from the assault on their servers by 11 A.M. ABCNews.com, for example, quickly implemented a contingency plan to ease the load, according to Doug Parrish, senior vice president and chief technology officer of the Walt Disney Internet Group, which oversees the news site's technology

X BY ROB BERNSTEIN

Tough Numbers

30 million: Number of Internet users who went online September 11, 2001, solely for news coverage.

5 million: Approximate number of Americans turning to Internet applications such as e-mail and IM for communication with loved ones after phone networks failed.

6,200 Number of Google queries for "CNN" in one minute (9:51 A.M. EST, 9/11/01).

2 minutes, 57 seconds: Span of time it took for the FBI home page to load in the hours just after the attack.

30,000 plus: The approximate number of terrorist-related tips that were sent to the FBI via its Web site within two days of the tragedy.

400 Percentage increase in the number of people making cell phone calls on Cingular's D.C. cellular phone network on September 11, 2001.

SOURCES: 1) and 2) Pew Internet & American Life Project; 3) Google Zeitgeist [google.com/press/zeitgeist.html]; 4) Keynote Systems [keynote.com]; 5) Computerworld; 6) ZDNet

NextTime...

When connecting matters most, it pays to reassess your personal communications systems. Here's a guide to Plan B

GET AN EMERGENCY ISP

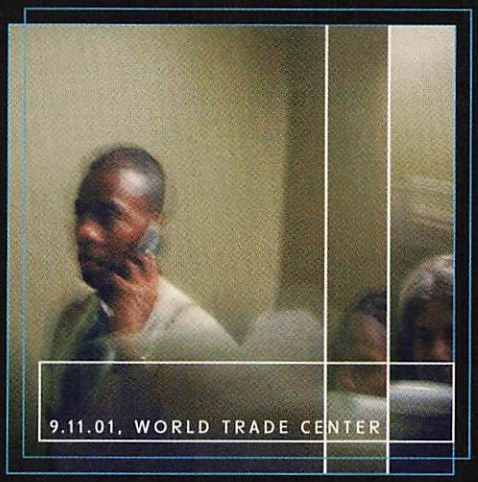
National providers such as AOL [aol.com], EarthLink [earthlink.com], and NetZero [netzero.com] offer sign-up CD-ROM disks for the asking. Order a few now and keep them around—should your ISP go down, you'll be able pop one in and sign up in minutes. Note to AOL users: If you can't get into AOL proper but you *can* get to the Web, try retrieving your e-mail at [aol.com]; when all else fails, you can still *hear* your e-mail, for $4.95 per month (first month is free), via the AOL By Phone plan.

DON'T ABANDON DIAL-UP

Though cable modems had fewer problems than dial-up during the attack, you never know. Keep a cheap modem around in case high-speed fails next time.

BE READY TO GO WIRELESS

Web-enabled cell phones and wireless Web services from providers such as Sprint PCS and VoiceStream could prove invaluable for getting information in a crunch. The all-digital Sprint PCS Wireless Web suite offers Web browsing and e-mail wherever you roam. On the handheld front, AOL offers its mobile members both e-mail and instant-messaging software. Finally, New York-based users of the BlackBerry handheld text-messaging device found it to be far more reliable than any voice-based services during the worst of the city's telecom tangle.



9.11.01, WORLD TRADE CENTER

PLAN AN E-MAIL ESCAPE ROUTE

Any concerned surfer should have one or more free Web-based e-mail accounts, whether at MSN Hotmail [hotmail.com], Yahoo! Mail [mail.yahoo.com], or another similar service. These work independently of your ISP, letting you access your mail from any Net-connected PC. For just-like-home convenience, back up your e-mail address list to this location as well.

IM-ENABLE YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

The phone system was so stressed that long-distance calls to or from many New Yorkers and Washington, D.C., residents were impossible during the crisis. Such difficulties give new value to having friends and family signed up with your instant-messaging service—be it one from AOL, Yahoo!, or MSN. They don't have to use it day-to-day, so long as it's there when they need it. —R.B.B.

resources. ABCNews.com's main page was stripped of all unrelated images, and server capacity was more than doubled by sharing resources with sister sites **ESPN [espn.com]** and **ABC [abc.com]**.

CNN.com and *The New York Times* also stripped their news sites of images and removed intrusive pop-up adverts. "We even suspended registration to make the site available to as many people as possible," says Meredith Artley, associate editor at the New York Times on the Web. **WSJ.com: The Wall Street Journal [wsj.com]**—which features subscription-only sections—was accessible free of charge.

And what the Internet may have lacked in rapidity it more than made up for in convenience. In the days after the attack, as surfers returned to their offices, logging on to the Net became their way of staying up on the latest developments while remaining at their desks. From the comfort of their cubes, workers across the nation tuned in to live or real-time broadcasts of New York Police Department scanners and television newscasts.

"The demand for online video and audio after the attack was unprecedented," says Andy Perez, director of operations for the Real Broadcast Network, a division of RealNetworks. "People are getting more comfortable with watching TV on their PCs." To meet the tremendous demand for live streams of coverage, ABCNews.com and other news hubs worked with RealNetworks to shift resources toward online newscasts and away from servers normally dedicated to streaming entertainment and sports programming.

In all, even considering its initial missteps, the Internet bore up remarkably well. One likely result: Major news organizations will base their future emergency plans and coverage on the improvised template devised during these unfortunate circumstances. The Net, fortunately, hasn't been tested during a nuclear attack. But the world's youngest mass medium held up when it was needed most.

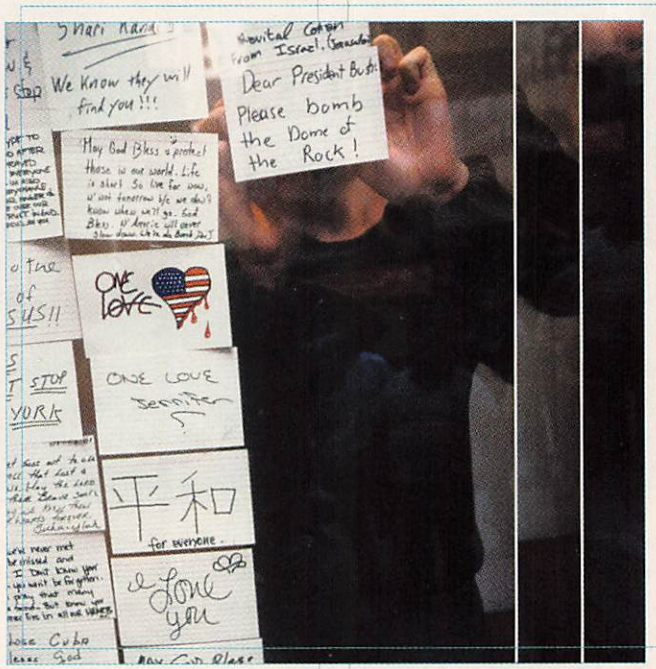
AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Across the Boards

Message boards across the Web were an immediate source of comfort in the aftermath of the attack. But that is only half the story

"Seek out all those that do not believe in Christ and eliminate them. For if they do not believe in Christ, they do not believe in me. Purge our society of these rodents." The World Trade Center had collapsed merely hours earlier. Authorities were already implicating Osama bin Laden or some other Islamic fundamentalist terrorist group, so I wasn't surprised to find this kind of anti-Muslim sentiment bubbling up online. But I *was* surprised by the venue: The post came from **Craigslist [craigslist.org]**, one of San Francisco's larger online communities, a gentle and liberal bulletin board on a site founded by apple-cheeked activist Craig Newmark.

Within minutes of the news, Newmark had put up a bulletin board for the mourning online community. He was not alone, as people flocked to message boards on the Web. On **Beliefnet [beliefnet.com]**, people of all faiths put aside their religious differences in a community outpouring of grief, filling hundreds of pages of posts with prayers and well-wishes to the suffering—regardless of which deity they might pray to. "I send my love to those who grieve, my strength to those who labor, my gratitude to all who stand together with me in horror at man's inhumanity to man," wrote one visitor whose sentiments echoed throughout the boards. "May healing and peace begin to grow from the rubble of so many unfinished dreams."



"Pointing fingers does not help anyone in this time of global suffering," wrote PeaceMama on Craigslist. "This event is not national, we are not alone on our planet. It is our duty to God and our children to behave responsibly and with nobility, to rise above the hate and racism."

"Violence begets violence, hate begets hate," added another surfer. "There is no excuse for these actions. But there is also no reason to allow rage and fury to take center stage."

Often, however, rage and fury did take center stage. It took only a few hundred posts for the shock and sadness to be infiltrated by hatred, xenophobia, and threats. Posters with nicknames such as IslamHater and ProudAmerican demanded that we revoke Arab visas, close the borders, boycott Arab businesses, and indiscriminately bomb Middle Eastern countries. A typical, less than eloquent (and less than literate) post: "If you see any of these [Arab] piss-ant's from now on, lets strip off their head-wear, men and women and spit on their faces. They should leave this country. Now."

It was the ugly side of human nature, as well as a disconcerting reminder about the essence of public bulletin boards. These spaces are the Web's truly democratic communities: Unlike private e-mail exchanges or mailing lists or chatrooms, bulletin boards are permanent, generally unmoderated, and very public. For better or worse, they are also usually anonymous. It's easy for a few active xenophobes or other troublemakers to pounce on an otherwise rational discussion and quickly overwhelm the conversation with their bile. Eventually, Newmark had to post a plea to his own community: "As rumors fly about the perpetrators, let's not compound this terrible tragedy by bashing ethnic or religious groups for the acts of fringe extremists."

Craigslist wasn't the only community to suffer these postings. They popped up everywhere people had gathered to talk, from political bulletin boards to ones for music fans. At the conservative political site **FreeRepublic [freerepublic.com]**, one post demanded that the U.S. revoke the green cards and student visas of all residents of Middle Eastern countries. At **Artist Area Bulletin Board [pub19.ezboard.com/bartistareabulletinboard]**, another message held

X BY JANELLE BROWN

JAMES LEYNSE/CORBIS SABA

that "there will be peace when that gutter religion, Islam, is wiped from the face of the earth. God help me, but I believe it to be so." The New York City–based techno artist Moby, who had been posting daily diary entries about the crisis for his fan base, broke down after reading the vitriol spewed in his own online community: "I have most likely lost a friend in this tragedy and I can't bear to look at the boards as they are right now," he wrote. "Most of you are wonderful, some of you are incredibly hurtful. I don't know why I do this anymore."

The wars weren't all about xenophobia, either. Even peaceful geek sites such as **Slashdot [slashdot.org]** and the blogger community **MetaFilter [metafilter.com]** had to deal with the flame wars that erupted between liberals and conservatives, patriots and protesters. An anti-Bush diatribe led posters on MetaFilter to complain: "We get to hear this condescending tone every time a Republican is in charge of decision-making." At Craigslist, a nasty argument erupted when one scribe burst out with: "What do you expect to happen? This is what happens when a country is run by white-bread, greedy yuppies!"

Perhaps it's not surprising that, in a situation so fraught with anger and frustration, the Web community was geared up for a fight. All that rage had to be released somewhere, and surely it's better that people vent online rather than start a brawl on the street. But it also underscores the problem with bulletin boards as a community forum: They are natural breeding grounds for verbal wars. Because public bulletin boards can be populated by as many transients as regulars, they sometimes lack the familiar community coziness of a mailing list. Those who stir up anger may be newbies who stop by for a day or two to bicker; they have no loyalty to the larger community. In addition, bulletin boards are anonymous, making it easy for troublemakers (or "trolls," as they're called) to stir up an argument without taking any personal responsibility for the mess.

Simply witness the nastiness that has been boiling over on the Happy Fun Slander boards at **F---edCompany [f---edcompany.com]** for the past year. It is perhaps the most horrifying cesspool of racism, homophobia, sexism, and bigotry that has ever existed on the Net. After the tragedy, not surprisingly, its boards were again the most violent, racist, and angry—by a long shot—with thousands of unreadable posts. Why? Simply because the board's visitors can vent without any consequences. And one fanatical screed encourages another.

Of course, for every flame war that erupted in the wake of the September 11 tragedy, even more community members were on hand to console mourners and work out the complex tangle of emotional reactions. It was important for Americans to show a united front in the days after the disaster, and for the most part, we did. But just a few steps into the Web's backstreets, the darker side of American discourse is permanently recorded in bulletin boards full of hatred and bickering—alongside desperate pleas for peace.

The Last Auction Hero

Moments after the attack, the carpetbaggers of the Net crawled out of their holes, with some sellers at auction sites trying to capitalize on the tragedy by selling WTC and Pentagon memorabilia. Although eBay declared a ban on such auctions, complete enforcement proved impossible. While most were canceled "within a matter of hours," according to eBay's Kevin Pursglove, many items managed to slip through. Which is when a band of self-appointed "protest bidders" went into action, making exorbitant phony bids and otherwise thwarting sales. From one Robin Hood's About Me page:

> **If I bid on your auction, chances are the EBAY COMMUNITY has yet again been faster than EBAY itself.**
>
> **DO NOT try to make any money out of the WTC disaster, and NONE OF YOUZ give me that BULL about donating the money you make! (Only exception: you have as ONLY payment option a check made out to a charity!). However: 1st option for donations SHOULD be the OFFICIAL sites like red cross, amazon.com, paypal.com or about 1000 others. Also EBAY itself has an official donation address on the front page....and as of all the bloody "We-Will-Win baseball-cap auctions" and other tripe like that: AT LEAST have the dignity and respect to WAIT A BIT before you sell it, you avaricious blood hounds!**

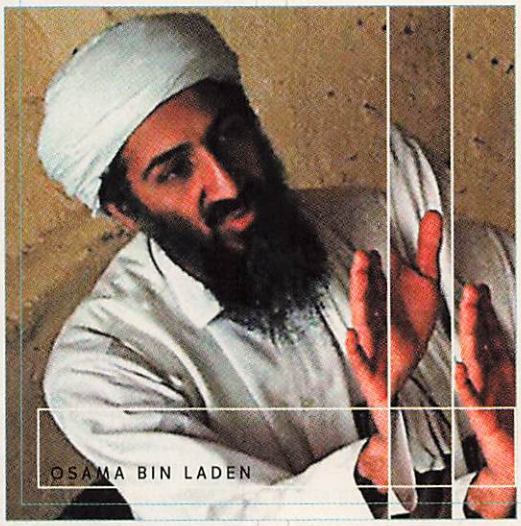
When Rich Godwin, a senior brand manager for Yahoo! Auctions, got the news of tasteless sales at his site, he set to work from within the system. "From an auction standpoint, we didn't want any items that had to do with the attacks or that might be somewhat associated with them. We have a task force that looks for inappropriate items, and we can block someone from even posting items for sale. There were things that got up, but those were limited, and we took them down." ANGELA GUNN

The Terrorists & the Net

Their weapons were low tech, but the terrorists could not have planned or carried out the attacks without the Internet

The Internet has suffered enough bad press recently; it hardly seems fair to add "fosters terrorism" to its list of failures. Yet alongside its ability to link people together in times of crisis, another truth about the Internet emerged from the rubble of the World Trade Center: It has helped make this modern and most vicious form of terrorism possible. "No Internet, no bin Laden" might be overstating it, but not by much.

Of course, terrorist actions themselves need not be high tech, as demonstrated by the primitive bombs of 19th-century anarchists and the box cutters and knives of today's hijackers. But the World Trade Center attack, a morbid masterpiece whose perfect execution required both intricate and covert coordination, simply would not have been possible without the Internet. Every aspect of the planning of this horrific event bore the marks of the information revolution.



OSAMA BIN LADEN

"They used the Internet, and they used it well," an FBI official said the week after the attacks, announcing the seizure of hundreds of e-mails exchanged by the hijackers. As this is written, we don't yet know what the messages contained. We do know the hijackers relied on personal computers, as well as those in public libraries and Kinko's.

But even from past FBI reports we know that Osama bin Laden relied on the Net to propagandize his cause and recruit troops. From press accounts we've learned that his followers raised money with Net scams involving bank transfers, credit card fraud, and other high-tech methods. It also appears that they appreciated both the convenience and the relative anonymity of booking their airline tickets on the Web. But the crucial element the Net provided to the most hunted criminal in the world was the ability to keep in contact with a vast network of otherwise isolated cells.

An e-mail found on the computer of a suspected bin Laden operative (being hunted for the 1998 Nairobi embassy bombing) illustrates the correspondent's distrust of conventional communication. It begins, "Brother Sharif," and warns, "The security position on the cell is at 100 percent danger." The agent, Haroun Fazul, writes: "Do not worry when I'm late in communicating with you since as you know the equipment is limited and now one is afraid to talk with you given the circumstances....Tell [another agent] not to call me on any of the telephones here at our end and advise all of the same...."

For years we've known that bin Laden and his operatives were using secure encryption for their online communiqués. And it's something that no spy plane, no satellite, and no human agent can help us counter. Encrypted messages on the Net provided bin Laden with a far more secure communication method with his operatives than the cell phones he first used. The NSA and other government agencies may have easily tapped his calls, but strong encryption presented an entirely different challenge. He could rely on it for the same reason that legitimate businesses do: In real-world situations it is practically impossible to break. When the latest encryption software can be downloaded for free from anywhere in the world—even the caves of Afghanistan, thanks to satellite modems—cybersurveillance becomes nigh-on impossible.

Indeed, back in September of 1998, then-director of the FBI Louis Freeh warned Congress that "not just bin Laden, but many other people who work against us in the area of terrorism are becoming sophisticated enough to equip themselves with encryption devices. We believe that the unrestricted proliferation of [encryption] products without any kind of court and law-enforcement access will harm us, and make the fight against terrorism much more difficult."

But even if Congress had wanted to make encryption technology more transparent to law enforcement, it would have found that an impossible task. Even as the Clinton administration sang the praises of the Clipper Chip (an encryption product with a built-in law-enforcement decoding key), virtually unbreakable

X BY ROBERT SCHEER AND ASEEM BATRA

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

public-key encryption technology was freely available on the Net.

It also appears that the bin Laden operation used more than encryption technology to get coded messages to its far-flung network of cells. As *USA Today* reported after the tragedy, bin Laden and other terrorists were "hiding maps and photographs of terrorist targets and posting instructions for terrorist activities on sports chatrooms, pornographic bulletin boards, and other Web sites."

Their missives were camouflaged both by obscurity (the idea of searching all the Web's porn sites is daunting, to say the least) and by the technique known as steganography. This technology relies not on scrambling code but, rather, on enshrouding sensitive information in the appearance of normalcy. The concept is as old as invisible ink, but in the Internet age, invisible messages—from text files to detailed maps—can be cloaked in such seemingly innocent material as music or video files (or such not-so-innocent material as pornography). Programs like Stego, S-Tools, and White Noise Storm are readily available on the Net, and they permit even relatively unskilled users to mask their information in any medium they choose.

Then there's the fact that the sheer volume of electronic messages makes them too numerous for spy agencies to sift through effectively. AOL users alone send 225 million e-mails each day, along with more than a billion instant messages. Even without encryption, that's a staggering amount of data to examine for obscure bits of information.

There's yet another hurdle. After the fact, the FBI managed to find plenty of e-mail messages in suspects' seized computers. But monitoring before the fact is something else. Let's say the FBI's computers were looking for an e-mail or instant message instructing that a group of planes should be airborne by a certain hour. If the e-mail was couched in terms of, say, a group of people being in their seats at a given concert, even the FBI's much-feared Carnivore system for Net-eavesdropping would be stumped.

Here, then, is the problem: You're looking for one photo out of millions e-mailed around the world each day. This photo is indistinguishable from the others. If you do find and decode it, in all likelihood the underlying message has been enciphered with virtually unbreakable cryptography and refers to something oblique . It's a mystery wrapped in an enigma encased in bulletproof glass.

In a recent report to Congress, the National Commission on Terrorism noted that the U.S.'s most formidable agencies are simply overwhelmed by the volume of data and the encryption that is often used. "The National Security Agency is America's most important asset for technical collection of terrorism information," the commission said, "yet it is losing its capability to target and exploit the modern communications systems used by terrorists, seriously weakening the NSA's ability to warn of possible attacks."

Regretfully, there was no useful warning—either high or low tech—of the most devastating attack on the United States since Pearl Harbor. Though much more will emerge about how it was pulled off, it is clear even at this early date that the technology of the Information Age played a vital role. Bin Laden's IT officer must be a very busy man.

One Wide World

The Web's global reach gave us perspective when we most needed it

Like many people in New York City, especially those born on foreign soil, my in-box on September 11 and the days that followed was a grab bag of different locations—London, Havana, Istanbul, Dar es Salaam—and the people e-mailing from those places all wanted to know the same thing. Beyond the safety of our loved ones, though, we sought answers about what had happened. TV bore the brunt of the load, and **CNN.com** and **The New York Times on the Web [nytimes.com]** groaned under the strain as a frightened public tried to get a handle on things, but once the main facts were established over the first day or two, something rang hollow for me. Maybe it was my background, or maybe it was just Blitzer fatigue, but I quickly realized I had to take my search in a different direction if I wanted something other than a relatively narrow angle on the basic, brutal facts of the event itself. While the initial television coverage focused—appropriately—on the domestic situation in the U.S., I figured the stage would soon move from the rubble in New York to the mountains of Central Asia and the diplomatic chambers of the world's capitals. I wanted to know what the rest of the world thought about that.

There are 6 billion people on our planet, and at that particular moment in time, it seemed as if every single one of them had something different to say. Some Israelis were hoping that the U.S. would now understand what it was like to live in con-

X BY BILGE EBIRI

stant fear of terrorism; Palestinians were actually echoing much the same thing. "We know how they feel," a commentary at **The Palestine Chronicle [palestinechronicle.com]** quoted one Palestinian as having said. "We bury our dead day by day." Amid all the outrage and sympathy, there were some who wondered whether the attacks on the U.S. had deeper causes than sheer, random lunacy. A Chinese military official, in an online chat on **Sina [sina.com]**, echoed the concerns of some around the world when he suggested that "there is a relationship between American policies and the intensification of terrorism."

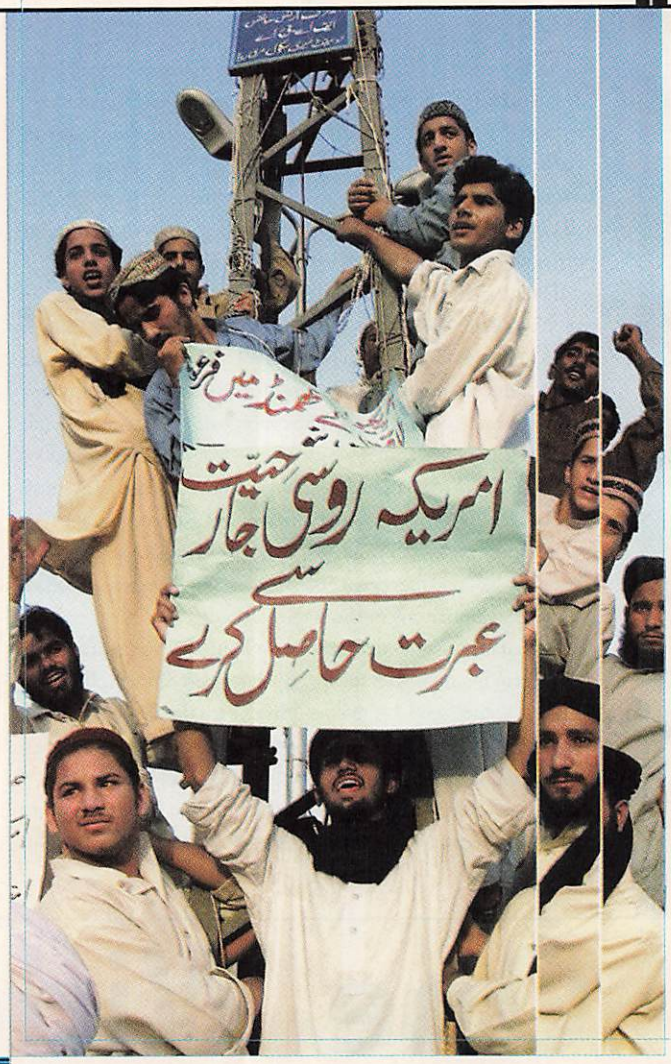
The message boards were another window on the global view. French-based **Afgha [afgha.com]**, which publishes news reports relating to Afghanistan from around the world, found itself under attack on its own boards—ironic, since the site is generally more aligned with the Taliban's opposition, the Northern Alliance. "Your countries are going to be destroyed," one individual bellowed, "your precious MECCA and MEDINA leveled to the GROUND." Similar warnings, threats, and expressions of impotent rage were to be found all across Usenet, on discussion boards, and in the guestbooks of related sites. While I can't be entirely sure what was being said, I'm pretty certain even soc.culture.esperanto erupted in a flame war.

For someone who likes to pride himself on trying to hear what others have to say, this unprecedented level of input made me want to scream. At the same time, once you've been exposed to the messy, bewildering complexity of the entire world's emotions, it's hard to find refuge in what **MSNBC [msnbc.com]** calls "Breaking News." As we in America were parlaying our massive grief into preparation for war, **The News International Pakistan [jang.com.pk]** was suggesting that the U.S. was considering reinstalling former King Zahir Shah as ruler of Afghanistan. **IsraelInsider [israelinsider.com]** reported that Israel's foreign ministry had instructed "consulates and embassies around the world to maintain a 'media silence' regarding Palestinian celebrations after the bombings so as not to appear opportunistic." Turkish news sites, such as **Milliyet.com**, informed me that F-16s were taking off from American bases in the southeastern part of that country.

IT TURNS OUT THAT GROUND ZERO IS A REALITY THE REST OF THE WORLD HAS HAD TO LIVE WITH FOR YEARS

For once it was America that had taken a huge, unthinkable hit, and those in the rest of the world were the ones with the distance necessary to report on the complexity of the situation. Our domestic media seemed in shock, repeating the same formula of stats, stories, and saber-rattling. It turns out that Ground Zero, as we had dubbed the site of the tumbled towers, is a reality the rest of the world has had to live with for years—and their experiences have given them a lot to say. With new fascination and sympathy I read about Egypt's own militant Islamic fundamentalist conflict—and how it has claimed more than 1,200 Egyptian lives—in **The Middle East Times [metimes.com]**. **TheMoscowTimes.com** pointed out that just two days after September 11, Russians marked the anniversary of the worst terrorist attack on their soil. **Algeria Interface [algeria-interface.com]** brought me up-to-date on the constant slaughter that poor African nation has had to endure in its recent past, and on how the country has coped.

Despite the deafening cacophony (or maybe because of it) the Web was, more than ever, a vital connection to the rest of the planet in the aftermath of September 11. We are far more connected to one another—from academics with complex opinions to foreign journalists with detached perspective to Usenet trolls spoiling for a fight—than we had ever imagined.



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Heart of the Net

Technology helped us help others all around the virtual world

First came the flowers, candles, handwritten notes, and hugs. As the U.S. struggled to cope on that terrible Tuesday, traditional tokens of support trumped technology initially. But soon people needed to *do* something,—to contribute, to take action. And while some found their way to New York City or Washington, D.C., and rolled up their sleeves, many turned to the Internet.

Within hours of the terrorist attacks, much of the Net had been reconfigured. Government sites ranging from Australia's **Fed.gov.au** to **Press Service of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan: News [www.press-service.uz/news.htm]** were redrawn to emphasize news about the missing and ways to help. The Nigerian newspaper **The Guardian [ngrguardiannews.com]** chronicled the plight of about 100 missing Nigerians who worked at the World Trade Center. Citizens of countries around the globe discussed the best ways to help victims and their families in newsgroups, from **alt.terrorism.world-trade-center** to **soc.culture.china**.

Amazon.com replaced its home page with an appeal for donations to the Red Cross. By that Friday, the total was more than $4.6 million, and rising by hundreds of dollars every few seconds. AOL collected $6 million from its members within 36 hours of its first request for giving. **American Liberty Partnership [libertyunites.org]**, a President Bush–endorsed giving hub, reported that online giving totaled $75 million by September 21. On its Web site, the **American Red Cross [redcross.org]** called the collective contributions "the greatest wave of compassion that the organization has ever experienced."

The Web also proved vital in some unforeseen ways. Companies such as **Aon [aon.com]** and **Morgan Stanley [morganstanley.com]** used it to disseminate news to the families of missing employees and to communicate with concerned clients. At **Classmates [classmates.com]**, friends connected with long lost school chums to make sure they weren't hurt. **VolunteerMatch [volunteermatch.com]** became a tool to help people give of themselves, whether with time, expertise, or blood.

For Lew Jaffe, president and C.O.O. of **PictureTel [www.picturetel.com]**, his duty in the aftermath of the tragedy was clear. Jaffe's son Josh, 13, was trapped in a train in New York City's Penn Station, able to speak with his father only briefly by phone. "If I wanted to see my son, how many other people wanted to see their own loved ones?" Jaffe said. To that end, he set up a free videoconferencing service so that anyone personally touched by the day's events could have a live video chat with loved ones in New York or Washington.

Israel Shamir carried his laptop and a portable scanner to the 69th Registry Armory so he could post pictures of the missing to the Web. **CNN [cnn.com]** caught wind of the effort and started its own online photo memorial. Sadly, by the time many such services were widely available, hope had been lost for most of those whose pictures were posted. With heartrending speed, the sites morphed from pleas for information into memorials.

Pakistani Muslim Usman Farman, who was working on the 27th floor of the World Trade Center that day, shared his story in a manner that became increasingly common as the crisis developed: a weblog, which was posted at **E46Fanatics: Brother, if you don't mind... [e46fanatics.com/phorum/read.php?f=1&i=45274&t=45274]**. When a Hasidic Jew found Farman lying stunned on the ground, he didn't hesitate. "He helped me stand up, and we ran for what seemed like forever without looking back," Farman said. "He was the last person I would ever have thought would help me. If it weren't for him, I probably would have been engulfed in shattered glass and debris."

HOW CAN YOU HELP? LOG ON TO YIL.COM/ATTACK FOR SOME GOOD IDEAS

X BY JEREMY CAPLAN

MARIO TAMA/GETTYONE

The Price of Liberty

When evil can hide behind anonymous e-mail and encryption, privacy becomes a harder sell

In the suddenly reconfigured landscape of America, those who would wage the "war" with terrorism are putting a higher priority than ever on electronic surveillance—so much so that several members of Congress are urging new initiatives that would ease restrictions on online eavesdropping and tighten restrictions against strong cryptography. Are we in danger of giving away important rights in the next few weeks? We asked a number of experts to map the new political terrain in Washington and beyond. For extended versions of these interviews and thoughts from other interviewees, please go to **www.yil.com/attack**.

ON SURVEILLANCE

The day of the disaster, America Online and EarthLink were both reportedly approached by FBI officials who were requesting that the services add the FBI's own monitoring system (formerly known as Carnivore) to their networks. The ISPs declined, instead opting to use their own technology to give the FBI the requested information.

CINDY COHN is legal director of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a nonprofit organization devoted to protecting civil liberties related to technology. The difference between [ISPs] installing the Carnivore box and ISPs giving out info on their own is not a compelling one. In some ways use of the Carnivore box is kind of a red herring. Most ISPs already have the info; the only question is whether they're giving the info out. At least in the instances we've become aware of, procedures were followed; I hear the FBI had the correct warrants. Should we lower that barrier? I think not. The barriers exist for a reason—to keep the FBI from doing wholesale surveillance on the American people. The [next issue] is that there's no oversight on the [scope of] these warrants. What are they seeking—Arab surnames? In that case, serious argument for overextension ought to be made. If there's an argument that we're in the midst of an international manhunt, sunset provisions [essentially, expiration dates on laws] seem to me to be a reasonable thing to do. Once they have the data, they have it, but sunset provisions could stop them once this crisis is over.

SIMON SINGH is the author of *The Code Book: The Secret History of Codes & Code-breaking*. His most recent project is *The Science of Secrecy*. In the 1960s, [telephone] wiretaps became acceptable because of the Mafia. *That* would seem to be legit usage. At the same time, though, people like Martin Luther King Jr. had their phones tapped. The material that was gathered from [King's] tap, which showed his darker side, was played to his wife and to the president. Anyone planning to give him a prize was sent this embarrassing material. People have to ask whom they fear most: terrorists or the government.

> TRACKING PEOPLE AFTER YOU KNOW THEY'VE DONE SOMETHING BAD IS INFINITELY EASIER THAN TRACKING THEM BEFORE

MIKE GODWIN is a policy fellow with the Center for Democracy and Technology. His most recent book is *Cyber Rights: Defending Free Speech in the Digital Age*. The problem that's really at the core of all this is that tracking people after you know they've done something bad is infinitely easier than tracking them before. It turns out that once you've flown some airplanes into a couple of buildings, the FBI is very interested in gathering information on you, and they can do it without a lot of wiretapping. People over- and underestimate intelligence-gathering capabilities. They overestimate the government's ability to extract relevant data from the spew of information in time for [law enforcement] to use it. What they underestimate is the ability of law enforcement to gather useful data from existing sources once the crime has been committed.

ON CRYPTOGRAPHY

SIMON SINGH: It's sort of impossible to ban cryptography, because it's not an object. And everybody doing anything secret, whether it's business or crime, does encryption. It's as commonsense as locking your car if it's parked on the street. I'd be shocked if the people involved [in the attack] weren't using crypto.

MIKE GODWIN: One of the things we know is that bin Laden routinely issues his orders orally to his lieutenants; not everything is done with a cryptophone or with secure e-mail. But there's a tendency for people to say, in this age of the Internet, that there must be something—something about computers—that's to blame.

X BY ANGELA GUNN

ON KEY ESCROW

Key escrow is a system that allows the government or a central body, under certain conditions, to hold copies of the secret keys people use to encrypt their files.

CINDY COHN: It's a bad idea to rush to key escrow as a solution when we don't know the problem [exists]. There was a call for key escrow after Oklahoma City, and as it turned out there was no encryption involved there at all. In any event, even if it turns out the terrorists used strong encryption, key escrow has been criticized by the scientific and tech communities as unworkable. First, it doesn't scale, and second, once there's a back door there's no way of preventing it from being used by the bad guys. There's nothing about this horrible attack that changes those scientific facts.

DAVID FARBER is the Alfred Fitler Moore professor of telecommunications at the University of Pennsylvania and former chief technologist for the FCC. There's a congressional bill currently demanding key escrow, though three years ago we saw papers taking positions that key escrow is very dangerous, because if the key database is penetrated, that's very dangerous for everything. Internet security depends on cryptography. If you're weak in that, you make attacking the Net more attractive to other terrorists, maybe the same set. There will be people pointing this out, and a lot will depend on how those people are treated.

ON CIVIL RIGHTS

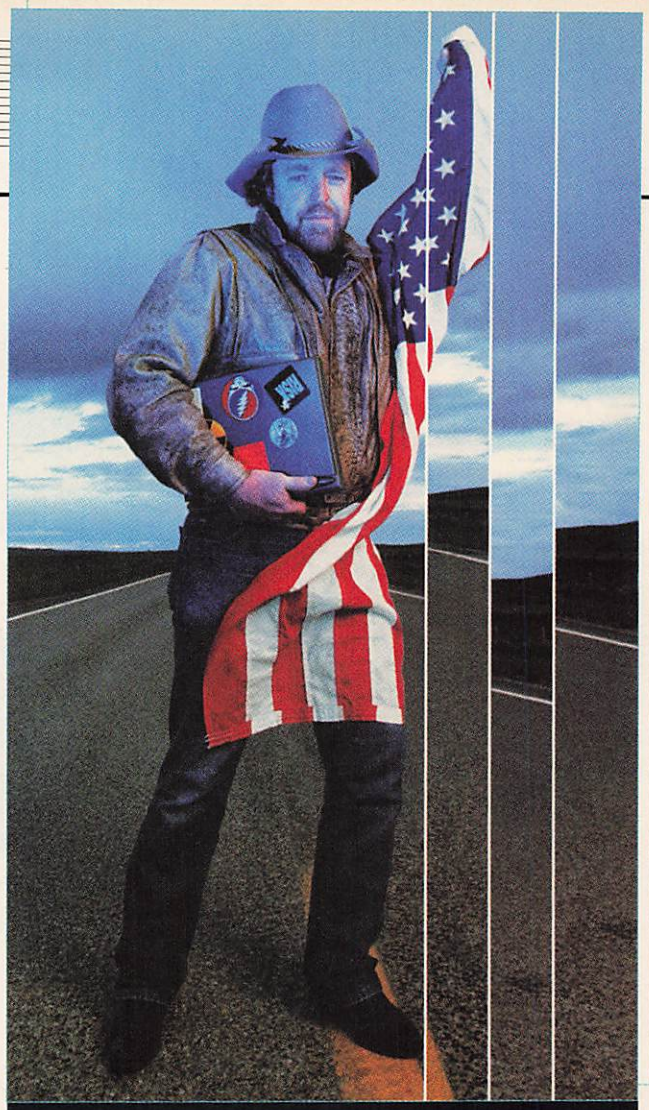
SIMON SINGH: Encryption is a country-by-country debate that reflects how a country feels about its civil liberties, how it uses its power.

MIKE GODWIN: Here's what's definitely going to happen: You're going to see Congress revisit wiretap laws and perhaps cryptography. There's going to be a strong push for compelled disclosure of encryption keys when the government asks for them. There could be a strong push to end anonymity on the Internet. In the U.S. we have a line of cases that says that the right to speak without being identified is a First Amendment interest, [but] there's going to be an impulse by lawmakers to say, "If you don't want to be watched, you're up to no good."

CORALEE WHITCOMB is president of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility. We are not in a state of war; we are in a new state of life. If we're to look to our info technologies as either the cause or the cure of that situation, we can no longer see them as technologies, but must instead see them as essential components of our lives that have, in their design from the outset, implications for our civil liberties and our security.

DAVID FARBER: The trouble with giving up civil rights is you don't get them back.

TED WOOD



BARLOW'S LAST WORD

John Perry Barlow, a retired cattle rancher, is a fellow at Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet & Society and a cofounder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation. He spoke to *Y-Life* about the future of surveillance and pending legislation concerning privacy several days after the tragedy. For the full interview, please see www.yil.com/attack.

There's this perverse choice that's being laid out between safety and freedom. It's a choice between curtailing freedom—in especially insidious ways—and deriving solutions that aren't solutions. I haven't seen any proposal that convinces me that any increased security really will take place. It wouldn't matter if they'd had the kind of surveillance they're asking for, in my opinion. During the first World Trade Center bombing they had an active wiretap on these people—and they managed to [bomb] it anyway.

Much of the legislation that has been proposed and is being passed has been proposed before; they were waiting for the right moment—especially Dianne Feinstein. There are forces that are in a true and ugly way delighted by this, because it validates their hideous view of the world. It provides them an opportunity to shape the world in their own view of terror and hatred.

These responses are as hideous as the act. This may sound strong but—everybody dies. Liberty is something that, with courage and faith and diligence, we can protect long after the lives of those people have passed.

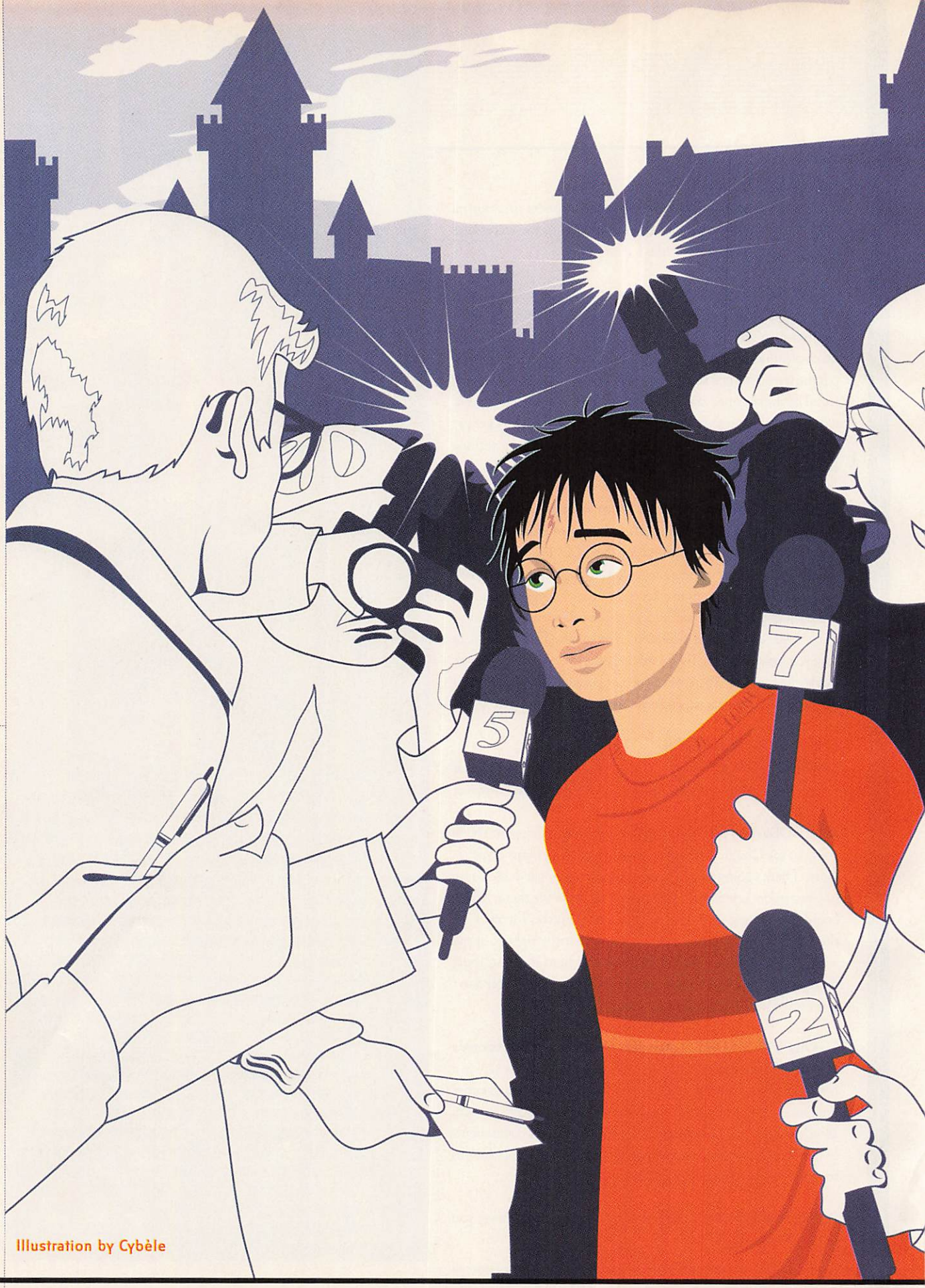


Illustration by Cybèle

PotterTraining

STILL FIGURING OUT WHO HARRY POTTER IS, AND WHY EVEN ADULTS ARE STANDING IN LINE TO BE NEAR HIM? ALLOW OUR FAQ TO EXPLAIN

Q Who's Harry Potter? Wasn't he the crotchety old guy on *M*A*S*H*?

A No, Spanky, that was actor Harry *Morgan* playing *Col. Sherman T.* Potter. Harry Potter, on the other hand, is the main character in a series of books by English author J.K. Rowling. Four books have been published so far, with a total of seven expected (although if we know our capitalism we'll all be watching *Harry Potter and the Absorbent Adult Undergarment* in 2040). The first film, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone,* will be released by Warner Bros. this month. Go to **Unofficially Harry Potter [www.uoguelph.ca/~aguitard]** for synopses of all the books.

Q Why do we sometimes hear the title as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* but other times as *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*? Which one is it?

A The original British title is *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.* It was modified to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in the U.S. in order to cash in on the huge sorcerer-stone craze sweeping the nation. It had nothing to do with the fact that Americans have no idea what the Philosopher's Stone is.

Q Who's responsible for the Harry Potter madness on the Net?

A Take a wild guess. Children (and adults training to be children) from around the world have developed a ring of Potter-themed Web sites including **The Leaky Cauldron [the-leaky-cauldron.org]** and **Harry Potter Connection [harry-potter-movies.net]**.

Q Why do my neighbors' kids dress up as witches and wizards when a new Harry Potter book comes out?

A Because they are filled with the magical winds of youthful fancy. Many stores open at midnight on the day the book is released so kids can dress up like Cure fans and start reading the book a full nine hours before everybody else. Think of it as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* for the Pokémon set. Now go buy some **Harry Potter Halloween Costumes [halloweencostumes4u.com/harrypotter.html]** at **HalloweenCostumes4u.com**.

Q Does anybody *not* like Harry Potter?

A Old Man Withers who lives in the broken-down amusement park outside town. Also Jeremiah Films, which has denounced the series for espousing witchcraft. Jeremiah sells a video called **Harry Potter: Witchcraft Repackaged: Making Evil Look Innocent [jeremiahfilms.com/Videos_in_Depth/hp_witchcraft_repackaged.html]**. It can be yours for only $24.95—or $14.95 with the conversion of a homosexual.

Q I heard something about Warner Bros. trying to shut down some Harry Potter fan sites. That sounds, like, so uncool, bro.

A Earlier this year, after Warner Bros. purchased the Harry Potter trademark, it sent scary letters to people all over the world—many of them little girls—in an attempt to secure Potter-related domain names. A PR nightmare erupted as fans launched **PotterWar.org.uk**. Curiously, when WB tried to secure all *Osmosis Jones*–related domains, there wasn't a peep.

Q Didn't I hear something about a lawsuit against Harry Potter?

A Nancy Stouffer of Pennsylvania claims that some ideas for the Harry Potter books were lifted from her 1984 book, *The Legend of Rah and the Muggles,* which features a character named Larry Potter and such magical items as a "worry stone." The result: Everybody's suing everybody. Bop on over to **www.RealMuggles.com** for Stouffer's Web site.

Q How have fans pledged their undying love for Harry Potter?

A Aside from buying truckloads of Harry Potter sheets and Hogwarts bedspreads, many devotees have written original tales that involve the characters from the Harry Potter series. Sites such as **Harry Potter Fan Fiction [angelfire.com/music/harrypotter/page2.html]** read like the real books, except that they are completely unintelligible.

Q How can I tell if I'm reading too much Harry Potter?

A Check out **[www.envy.nu/flyingfig/obsessions.html]**. There you can raise your self-awareness with such tidbits as "You tap blank sheets of paper with a twig to reveal a map." And 999 more.

Q Does the next book have a title yet?

A In a chat **[yahooligans.com/content/chat/jkrowlingchat.html]**, Rowling confirmed that it will be *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix.* Book Six has not yet been titled, although one possibility is *Harry Potter: Attack of the Clones.* This is a long shot, though, considering that this is the worst title ever.

Q If Harry Potter fought Pikachu, who would win?

A Warner Bros. Pictures. ■

Modern Humorist is a daily humor magazine [modernhumorist.com].

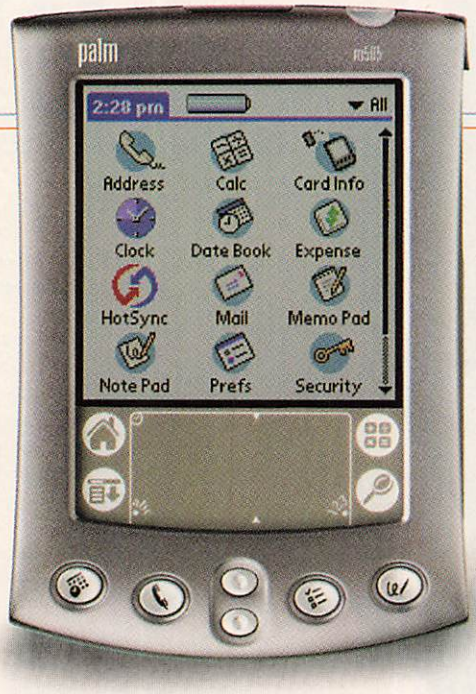
gadget guide

OUR FRESHEST PICKS. DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH POCKETS? BY DON WILLMOTT

PDAS

The once-sizzling PDA market has cooled this year. That may be bad news for Palm and Handspring, but it's good news for you. Prices have tumbled, and new models with improved features are sometimes less expensive than the older models they replace.

Your biggest decision: Do you go with a Palm OS–based device (from Palm, HandEra, Handspring, or Sony) or pick a Windows-like Pocket PC OS–based device, such as the Compaq iPAQ? It's hard to go wrong on the Palm side; there's a huge assortment of accessories and software available, and you can zap your business card to about 7 million people. If you work in a Windows environment and want to fiddle with spreadsheets and documents on the go, you'll probably gravitate toward the Pocket PC OS models.

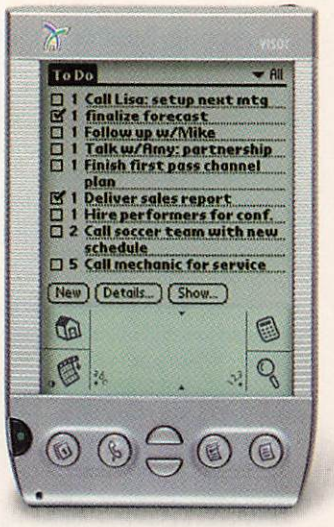


I GOTTA HAVE A PALM

The newest generation of Palm devices is the first to include an expansion slot, and the **Palm m505** is the best equipped of the bunch. Use the slot to upgrade from the standard 8MB memory, back up data, or attach tiny gadgets, including portable keyboards, cameras, or wireless modems. The color screen makes it easy to read all the e-mail you download.
We Really Like: The superslim design. It looks especially good in the titanium color. **However:** You'll pay a price in battery life for the color screen. **$449 [store.palm.com]**

I NEED TO GET WORK DONE The **Compaq iPAQ H3635 Pocket PC** has all the typical PDA functions, but also lots of Windows-like apps and plenty of memory (32MB). Add an expansion sleeve to attach more memory or a modem for live Net access.
We Really Like: All that memory, and the mini-PC-like operation. **However:** The expansion sleeve makes the device clunky. **$549.99 [athome.compaq.com]**

I WANT TO CUSTOMIZE The Palm look-alike **HandEra 330** beats other PDAs on functionality and customization. The Graffiti writing area is virtual, so you can turn it off to gain screen space, and the 8MB device has both a CompactFlash slot and a Multimedia Card slot.
We Really Like: The versatility of the two-slot design. **However:** There's a wider array of accessories available for Palm products. **$349.99 [www.handera.com]**



I'M COMMITTED TO VISOR New season, new specs. Not only does the **Handspring Visor Pro** have more memory (16MB) than older models, it's also less expensive. If you've already invested in Handspring accessories, this is the smart Visor upgrade.
We Really Like: The new, lower price and the versatility of the expansion slot. **However:** Palm models have slots now, too. **$299 [handspring.com]**

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2001

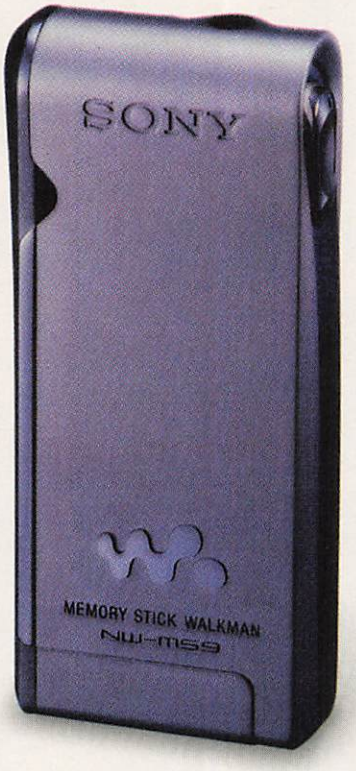
When sorting through the huge variety of MP3 players on the market, ask yourself these questions: How much music do I want to take with me? How will I get music from my PC onto my player?

Answer 1: More music is better, but it's a classic trade-off. The more you want, the more you'll pay. Answer 2: Personal preference, but if you have lots of tunes, consider memory cards or even a hard drive–based device that lets you take your whole CD collection with you.

MP3 PLAYERS

I HAVE DJ FANTASIES If you burn MP3 files onto custom CDs (20 hours of music per disc!), you want the recently improved **SONICblue RioVolt SP250.** It plays both standard audio CDs and those MP3 files. The LCD is big and backlit.
We Really Like: It's a rugged device with a shock-resistant design. **However:** For obvious reasons, it's bigger than solid-state MP3-only players. **$179.95 [www.riohome.com]**

I TRAVEL WITH ALL MY TUNES Creative Technology is almost synonymous with MP3, and its latest design plays an especially happy tune. Inside the **Creative Nomad Jukebox** is space for 20GB of music (that's 4,000 songs). With the player's dual ports for stereo lines out, you can hook it up to speakers for a portable party.
We Really Like: The large display. It's surprisingly easy to keep track of all those songs. **However:** At 14 ounces, it's pretty heavy. **$399.99 [nomadworld.com]**



I'M GOING TO THE GYM The **Sony NW-MS9 Network Walkman** is about the size of a lighter; it doesn't get much more portable than this. Your songs live on removable 64MB Memory Sticks that hold more than an hour of music (the device itself comes with 64MB of storage). Add a Memory Stick reader to your PC for easy file transfer, and trade music with your Sony-compatible friends.
We Really Like: The tiny design and the separate remote control. **However:** Additional Memory Sticks are still relatively pricey ($80 for 64MB).
$299.95 [sonystyle.com]

I'M A BEGINNER A Rio player for under $100? That's hard to resist. The **SONICblue Rio One** has 32MB of storage and a USB connector for fast music transfer to and from your PC. Consider this model your "welcome to the world of MP3" device.
We Really Like: The small size. **However:** 32MB is typically good for less than an hour's worth of music. Consider additional 32MB or 64MB memory cards.
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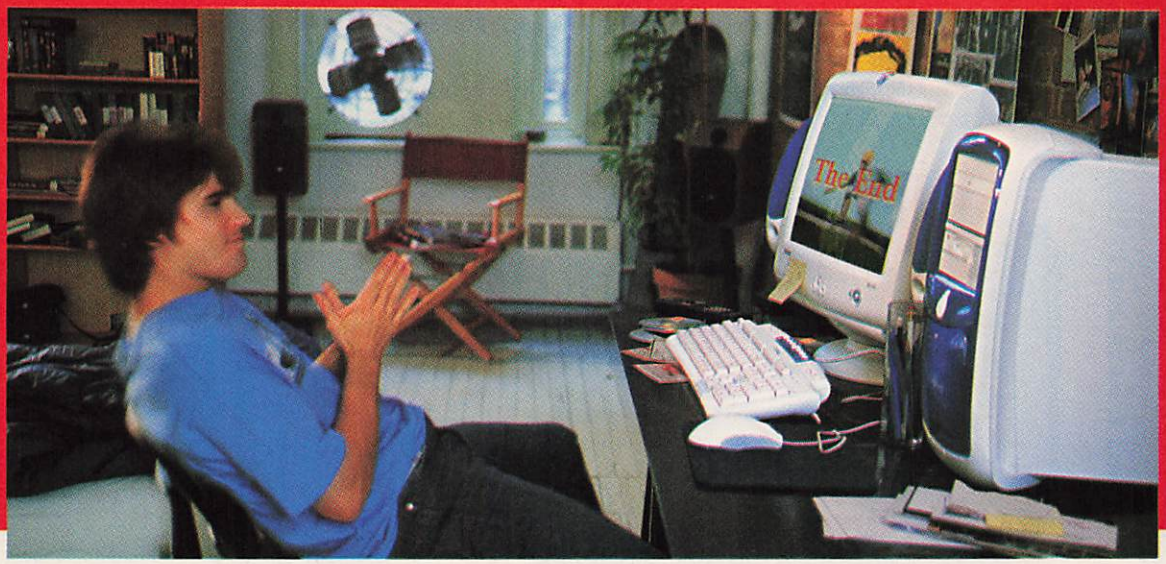

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COMPAQ
Inspiration Technology

2001

Digital cameras are still perceived as too expensive and too hard to use. It's time to take another look. Amateur shooters can find great choices under $300, and after a year of regular use, you'll have saved at least $100 in film and processing. Models are clustered around varying levels of resolution, and most manufacturers offer choices at each level. You'll hear about 2-, 3-, 4-, and even 5-megapixel models. Higher is better—and the higher you go, the more it will cost you. If you're semiserious, shop at 3 megapixels and above.

DIGITAL CAMERAS

I WANT TO GET SERIOUS Once your resolution quality reaches 4 megapixels, you're in high-end territory. That's where you'll find the **Sony Cyber-shot DSC-S85**, with its Carl Zeiss 3x optical zoom lens, 1.5-inch color LCD display, and internal RAM buffer for the three-frame burst mode.

We Really Like: The price. It's Sony's first sub-$1,000 4-megapixel camera. **However:** Amateurs don't need to spend this much. **$800 [sonystyle.com]**

I JUST SHOOT QUICK SNAPS The **Fujifilm FinePix 2300** is easy to use and priced right for first-timers. The 2.1-megapixel resolution is fine for point-and-shoot snapshots, and the 2.5x digital zoom is a great bonus at this price. Images go back to your PC via USB.

We Really Like: The design. Not too many buttons. **However:** The resolution isn't high enough to generate perfect 8" x 10" enlargements. **$279 [fujifilm.com]**

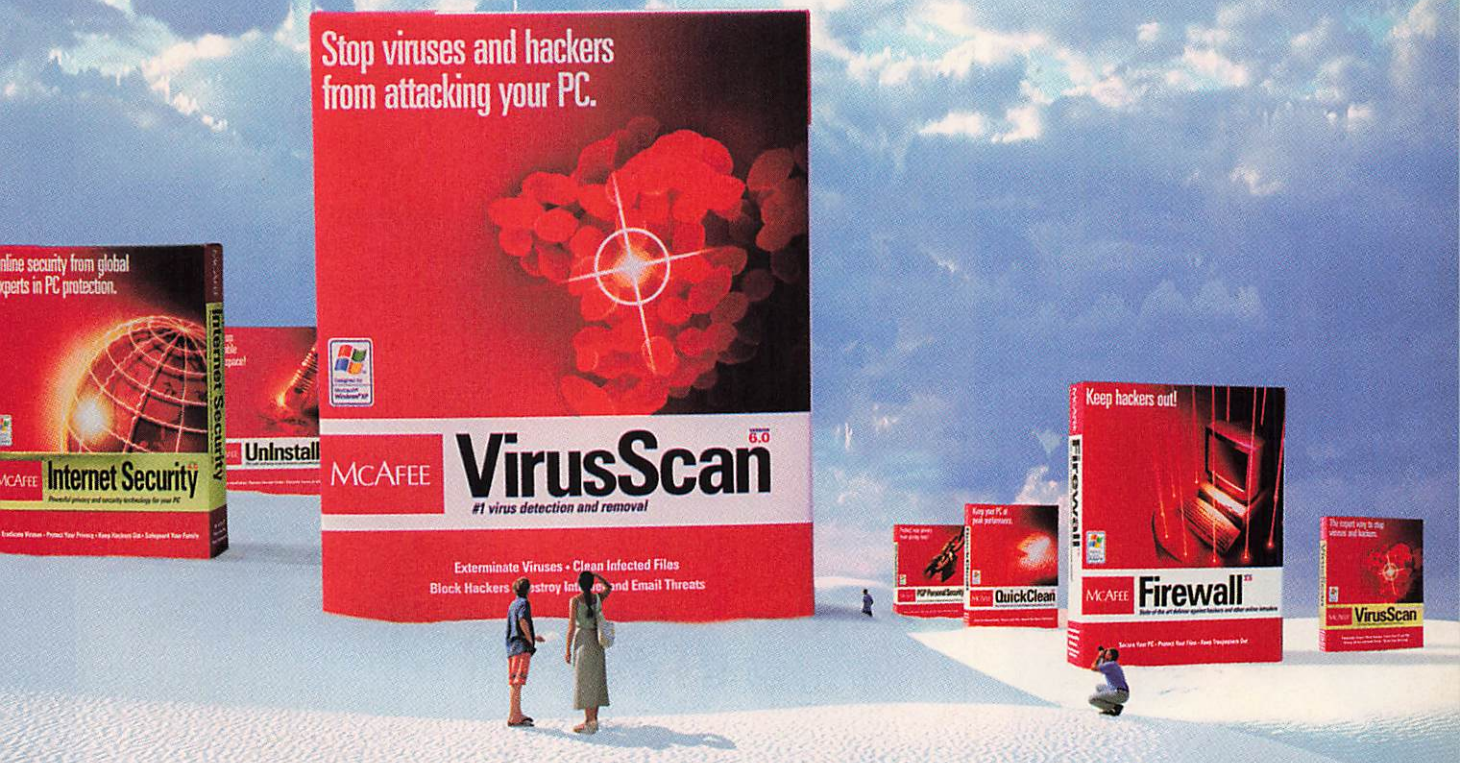
I'M A PRO Sure, the **Nikon D1X**'s price is stratospheric. But look at it this way: A few years ago it would have been three times higher. With a 5.47-megapixel resolution and a top shutter speed of 1/16,000th of a second, this is a camera that will satisfy the most demanding pro.

We Really Like: Hey, what's *not* to like? **However:** In true pro fashion, lenses are sold separately. **$6,130 [nikonusa.com]**

JUST MAKE IT REALLY EASY TO USE Kodak's best digicam offering, the **EasyShare DX3900 Zoom**, is a 3.1-megapixel model with both digital and optical zooms. Upload images to your PC via the one-button dock (which also acts as a battery recharger).

We Really Like: The idiotproof dock and the accompanying software. **However:** The dock costs extra—$79.95 extra. **$449 [kodak.com/go/dx3900]**

IF YOU'VE EVER HAD A COMPUTER PROBLEM, YOU'VE JUST FOUND THE 7 GREAT WONDERS OF THE WORLD.



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2001

The pre-holiday arrival of Microsoft's Xbox is shaking up the gaming world, making both first-time buyers and upgraders think hard about their $300 decision. (Of course, both Xbox and PlayStation 2 can double as DVD players, making them look like relative bargains.) Will you even be able to get your hands on one of the more than a million Xboxes in the pipeline for Christmas? Order now.

But don't forget Nintendo. Its goal is to make The Simpsons Road Rage look better than it's ever looked before. And it does.

GAME CONSOLES

I'M A SONY FREAK With 20 million boxes already parked in front of TV sets worldwide, **Sony PlayStation 2** is the Godzilla of gaming, and it's only getting bigger. Recent innovations include a $39.99 connector for Net hookups via modem or broadband. A deal struck between Sony and AOL means that you can instant-message your friends while you play. And like Xbox, the PS2 has a DVD drive that can also be used to watch regular movies.

We Really Like: The backward compatibility with original PlayStation games. **However:** The monopoly is broken. Xbox is a serious technological competitor. **$299.99 [us.playstation.com]**

I LOVE PIKACHU The **Nintendo GameCube** has fewer ambitions than Xbox or PS2. There's no DVD drive, and the plans for online gaming are still limited. The focus here is on high-quality gameplay, and the effects of the underlying graphics technology are dazzling. Those who've grown up in the Nintendo environment will rush to upgrade, especially given the sub-$200 price tag. But they'll have to upgrade their games, too, since GameCube isn't backward-compatible with older Nintendo software.

We Really Like: The size (it's just 4 inches high) and the fun colors to choose from. **However:** Keep in mind that Nintendo is the home of Mario, Pokémon, and Zelda. Many titles are for younger gamers. **$199 [nintendo.com]**

I WANT A NEW THRILL It's the new game in town. The **Microsoft Xbox** is a hugely ambitious attempt to combine gaming, DVD entertainment, and the Net into one VCR-size console. With a 733MHz processor, an internal hard drive, and a broadband connection (multiplayer network gaming will be available next year), this is the all-in-one approach to on-screen fun.

We Really Like: The quality of the games available right from the start. **However:** Quality and quantity are two different things. The PS2 offers far more titles. **$299 [xbox.com]**

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Now you can turn everyday home movies into cinematic works of art. Pinnacle® Systems, winner of seven Emmy Awards for technical achievement, brings you Pinnacle Studio version 7– easy-to-use video editing software with a drag and drop interface and dozens of professional features. Imagine jazzing up your home movies with cool scene transitions and Hollywood FX 3D effects, slow and fast motion, music and titles, real time previewing, and much more. So use Pinnacle Studio and your digital or analog camcorder to make your next video a smash hit. For details check out **www.pinnaclesys.com/films.**

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MODERN MONEY BLUES
"Sittin' here thinkin'
Where did my job go
Sittin' here thinkin'
Where did my money go
Well, I gave it to my broker
He ain't got it no mo'

Everything's deflated
Like a tire on a car
Everything's deflated
Like a falling star
Well, the man came and took
my computer back
I'm glad I hid my old guitar..."
—WITH APOLOGIES
TO BOB DYLAN

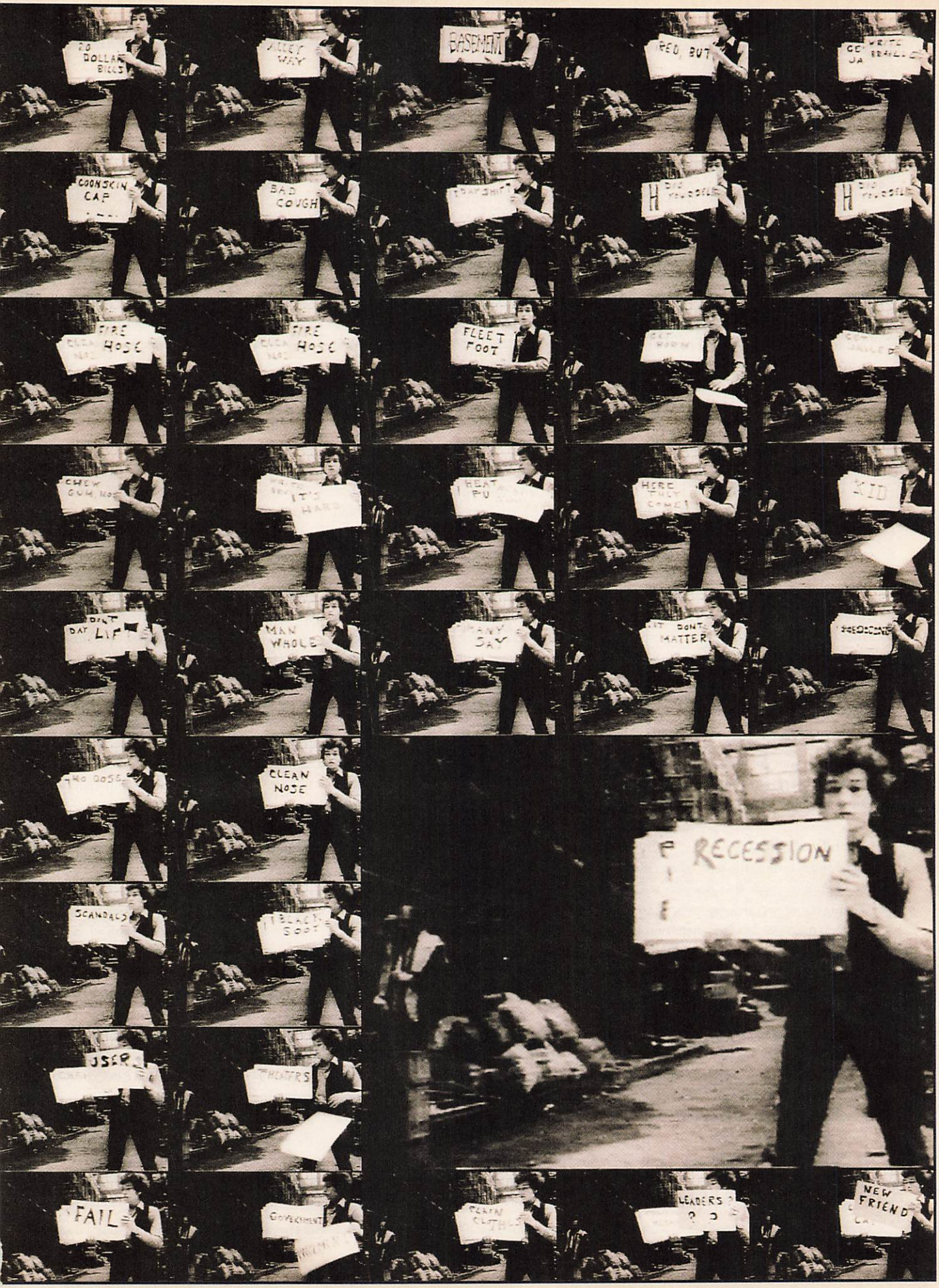
DON'T CLICK TWICE, IT'S ALL RIGHT

It's not just folklore: The threat of recession's become real. But with online help, you can go positively Wall Street

It was a great ride while it lasted. As dot-com fever swept the nation, for a brief period we were all living large—using the Monopoly money we'd won playing Internet stocks to splurge on obscene indulgences such as new SUVs and big-screen TVs. Then came the day that changed the world forever, as terrorists attacked the World Trade Center, talk of war drowned out what was left of the year's optimism, and the stock market—and American consumers—reacted accordingly.

X

BY DEAN FOUST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LEADERS
NEW FRIEND
RECESSION

Now that the economy has spiraled into a recessionlike funk—with an even more uncertain future in light of recent events—the bill has suddenly come due for those years of high living. Unemployment is rising, housing values are sliding, and with personal debt levels at record highs, many Americans are resigned to a year or more of austerity while they coax those credit card balances back down. If it makes you feel any better, know that in Silicon Valley, repo men are working overtime to reclaim many of the Alfas, Porsches, and Jaguars that had become de rigueur at the dot-coms that fooled us into investing in them.

Depressing though this may seem, here's one word of advice: Relax. Because like Aerosmith and a garlic pizza, the American economy always comes back around. If the Internet helped get us into this mess, the Internet can help dig us out. That's because the Net holds a treasure trove of resources that can assist you with everything from reining in your living expenses to getting a better handle on your job security. Should, alas, your finances be truly beyond repair, there are even sites that will help you win relief from your creditors. Herewith are the sites that every individual needs to ride out any recession.

NEED WORK?

Oh, for a return to the days when enlightened employers wooed workers with fat signing bonuses, concierge services, and afternoon massages. Nowadays, the only thing management is serving up is pink slips. If you'd rather make a move before your boss asks you to go, get busy monitoring this suite of sites for intelligence on whether your employer is likely to start swinging the ax. Three sites—**DotcomScoop.com**, **DotComDoom [dotcomdoom.com]**, and **F---edCompany [f---edcompany.com]** (which has expanded its range to include the poop on lots of nontech companies)—allow users to trade intelligence on which companies have layoffs in the offing.

If, by chance, you do get downsized, check in with the Web site of the National Employee Rights Institute, **Workplace Fairness [nerinet.org]**, which offers a wealth of resources to help you determine whether your employer abided by the laws governing terminations—and whether you have any recourse if it didn't. Then get yourself over to **Monster.com**, the best of the job-search Web sites, which, despite the perception that nobody's hiring, has more than a million jobs listed—double the number it had a couple of months ago.

TIGHTENING THE BELT

Income ain't coming like it used to? Time to reduce your outgo. Oh, sure, you could take such draconian measures as making all your personal calls through the free Net-based phone service **Dialpad [dialpad.com]**—if you don't mind that your callers sound like they're talking to you from a rain barrel in the Atlantic. It's okay, there are more civilized ways to trim your spending. Click over to **LowerMyBills.com** to comparison-shop for a better deal on a wide range of basic services, including insurance, Internet access, long-distance and wireless phone service, credit cards, mortgages, even electricity. Simply punch in your ZIP code and e-mail address (no name required) and LowerMyBills.com will generate competing offers, where available, for your neighborhood. In the case of energy, the site will actually analyze your usage patterns to help steer you toward the best deal. If you're looking for the catch, know that LowerMyBills gets paid if you switch—usually between $20 and $400. But why should you care, if you're saving money?

BUDGETING BLUES

Paying off your Visa bill each month with, ahem, your MasterCard? The **Quicken.com Debt Reduction Planner [quicken.com/shopping/debt]** can show you the true cost of carrying all that high-priced revolving credit—and help you devise a savings plan to dig your way out. If this exercise strengthens your resolve to put your financial house in order, **Aetna Financial Services: Calculators [aetnafinancial.com/your_life/info_center/calculators]** has the best set of calculators going for determining everything from your net worth to whether you're on target to meet your financial goals. The real gem is Aetna's household budget calculator, with entries for 45 different income and spending categories—everything from medical expenses to auto insurance. If you conclude you need professional help, Aetna will put you in touch with one of its financial planners.

CREDITORS AT THE DOOR?

If you're sinking hopelessly in debt, be forewarned that, thanks to new congressional reforms, bankruptcy isn't the easy escape it once was. A better option is to enlist the help of **Myvesta.org**, whose debt counselors have helped negotiate new repayment terms for more than four million consumers since 1994. While the site charges upward of $300 for its negotiating services, that may be a small price to pay if its Crisis Relief Team helps reduce your debt payments—and especially if it helps prevent bankers from foreclosing on your house. You can also use Myvesta's vast library of resources to better learn how to tame your spending—and the debt monster.

RETIRING EARLY

So only last summer you were dreaming of using your stock market windfall to retire in a few years? Dream on, Walter Mitty. If you're like most investors, the market crash wrecked those plans. If you'd like to reassess your retirement prospects, **Financial Engines [financialengines.com]**, a service conceived by Nobel economist William Sharpe, can help. Punch in your age, income, and other personal data, as well as your holdings in any of the 11,000 mutual funds and 8,000 stocks tracked by Financial Engines, and the site will run probability analyses to determine the odds of your achieving your goals. If you come up short, for $39.95 the site will recommend which funds you should buy or sell. Plan on forking over an additional $39.95

per quarter for an updated assessment of what and when to buy and sell.

SANE TRADING

In recent years, making a bundle in the market was easy: Buy Intel, Cisco, or the Internet flavor-of-the-week, then ride that rocket ship to the moon. We were a nation of geniuses! But the brutal collapse of even some of the best tech companies served as a painful reminder of how difficult investing really is. If you're ready to construct (or reconstruct) your portfolio, these three sites can help you research and pick stocks with the staying power to weather downturns. At **MSN Money: Investing [moneycentral.msn.com/investor/home.asp]**, 17 predefined screens will help you build a disciplined portfolio. You can also use any of 500 criteria to sniff out stocks that meet your exacting standards.

Once you've settled on a handful of candidates, get clickin' on **Quicken.com: Security Evaluator [quicken.com/investments/secevall]**, where a stock valuation calculator will help you determine the intrinsic value of thousands of stocks based on their historical valuations. And if, after all this, you'd prefer to take a pass on the roller-coaster stocks in favor of stabler ones—or funds that let you sleep at night—**RiskGrades [riskgrades.com]** can help you calculate the volatility of a single stock, a mutual fund, or an entire portfolio.

THE TAX TRAP

Want to avoid a replay of the recent tax season fiasco—when many of us were whammied by having to pay hefty taxes on stocks and mutual funds that had already dropped in value? Given the recent market gyrations, it could happen again. **SellSignal.com** provides a tax-savvy tracker that lets you analyze when to consider selling individual stocks, as well as stocks held in a retirement account, for optimum tax advantage. If you'd like to avoid the anguish of not knowing until after the fact whether your mutual fund manager is going to stick you with a hefty tax bill, **Foliofn [foliofn.com]** can help you create your own mutual fund, giving you better control over your returns—and the taxes on them—than you get in a pooled fund.

TAKE STOCK IN BONDS

Burned by chasing high-flying tech stocks that crashed? If you'd be happy if you never saw another stock, here are three words of advice: bonds, bonds, bonds. They're less volatile, and if you play it smart, you can get an easy 4 to 5 percent return on each. If you need a crash course in Bonds 101, click over to the Bond Market Association's **InvestinginBonds.com**, where you'll find tools and links to other helpful sites, as well as a breakdown of the prior day's trading in municipal bonds, which can help you determine the best deals in munis. At **TreasuryDirect [www.treasurydirect.gov]**, you can buy rock-solid Treasury bills and notes direct from government auctions—guaranteeing you a better price than you'd get from a broker—and since you're doing it yourself, there are no transaction fees. ■

Dean Foust is *Businessweek*'s Atlanta bureau chief. He writes frequently about finance.

FORD RACING 100TH ANNIVERSARY SWEEPSTAKES OFFICIAL RULES

1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. A PURCHASE DOES NOT IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING. Sweepstakes begins at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time (ET) on 10/01/01 and ends at 11:59 p.m. ET on 12/31/01 ("Sweepstakes Period").

2. ELIGIBILITY: Sweepstakes is open only to legal residents of the 48 contiguous United States and the District of Columbia ("U.S."), who are 18 years of age or older, and are licensed drivers at time of registration, except for employees (and their immediate families and members of the same household of such employees) of Ford Motor Company ("Sponsor"), it's divisions, affiliates, subsidiaries, dealers and advertising or promotion agencies.

3. HOW TO ENTER: There are two ways to enter the Sweepstakes: 1) Complete the on-line Sweepstakes entry form at www.fordracing.com and submit as directed prior to 11:59 p.m. ET on 12/31/01; or 2) Complete an official entry form, available while supplies last at the Ford Racing display at select racing events throughout the Sweepstakes Period, and deposit in the entry box provided prior to 12/31/01. Limit of one entry per person or e-mail address, regardless of entry method. Multiple entries from the same person or e-mail address or entries generated by a script, macro or other automated means will be disqualified. In the event of a dispute, Internet entries will be deemed made by the authorized account holder of the e-mail address submitted at the time of entry. The authorized account holder is the natural person who is assigned to the e-mail address by an Internet access provider, on-line service provider, or other organization that is responsible for assigning e-mail addresses or the domain associated with the submitted e-mail address. Entries that are incomplete or corrupted are void and will not be accepted for entry. Void where prohibited.

4. PRIZES/APPROXIMATE RETAIL VALUE (ARV): One (1) Grand Prize – Limited Edition Ford Racing tailgate version Ford Econoline (ARV $45,000); One (1) First Prize – Ford Racing autographed helmet (ARV $1,000); One (1) Second Prize – 100th Anniversary Ford Racing Gear Package (ARV $750) consisting of a jacket, two (2) lightweight travel chairs, two (2) crew chief shirts, two (2) Anniversary polo shirts, duffel bag, sweatshirt, Limited Edition 100th Anniversary hat, and an autographed Dale Jarrett mechanic's shirt.

5. WINNER SELECTION: Winners will be selected in a random drawing, conducted on or about 01/09/02 from among all valid entries received. Drawing will be conducted by Exposure Marketing, Inc., an independent judging organization. The odds of winning depend on the number of valid entries received. Grand, First and Second Prize winners will be notified by mail and/or phone within approximately seven (7) days of the drawing and will be required to execute and return an Affidavit of Eligibility and Liability Release, and except where prohibited, a Publicity Release, within 14 days of notification date. Failure to timely return executed form will cause prize to be forfeited and awarded to an alternate. Acceptance of a prize constitutes permission (except where prohibited by law) to use winner's name, likeness, biographical information, photograph and any statement or remarks made about winning the prize or participation in the Sweepstakes for advertising and promotional purpose without additional compensation. If any winner is under the age of majority in state of residence ("minor"), prize will be awarded in the name of winner's parent or legal guardian. If a prize notification letter is returned or deemed undeliverable, an alternate winner may be selected. Prizes will be awarded in the names of the winners and are neither transferable nor exchangeable for cash; however, Sponsor reserves the right to substitute a prize of equal or greater value due to unavailability. Winners will be responsible for all taxes (federal, state, local and/or income) and any expenses not listed related to acceptance and use of prize. Grand Prize winner: a) must take delivery of vehicle through a Sponsor-selected dealership near winner's residence within 60 days of notice of availability or prize may be forfeited and awarded to an alternate; b) must provide valid driver's license and evidence of insurance at time of delivery; and c) will be responsible for registration, license, title and insurance fees, and any options added to the vehicle at winner's request.

6. CONDITIONS: Sponsor not responsible for error, omission, interruption, deletion, defect, delay in operations or transmission, theft or destruction or unauthorized access to or alterations of entry materials, or for technical, network, telephone, computer, hardware or software malfunctions of any kind, or inaccurate transmission of, or failure of Sponsor to receive entry information on account of technical problems or traffic congestion on the Internet or at any website or any combination thereof. Sponsor is also not responsible for any injury or damage to entrant's or any other's computer related to or resulting from playing or downloading any materials in the Sweepstakes. Sponsor reserves the right, in their sole discretion, to cancel Sweepstakes in its entirety if it becomes technically corrupted or because of non-authorized human intervention. In that event, Sponsor will select winner from all eligible entries prior to exercising its rights to suspend or cancel the Sweepstakes and will post notification of cancellation on www.fordracing.com. CAUTION: ANY ATTEMPT BY A CONTESTANT OR ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL TO DELIBERATELY DAMAGE ANY WEBSITE OR UNDERMINE THE LEGITIMATE OPERATION OF THE SWEEPSTAKES MAY BE A VIOLATION OF CRIMINAL AND CIVIL LAWS, AND SHOULD SUCH AN ATTEMPT BE MADE, SPONSOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO PROSECUTE ANY SUCH INDIVIDUAL TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW. By entering, participants: (a) agree to these official rules and the decisions of the Sponsor and judges which shall be final in all respects; (b) release Ford Motor Company, its divisions, subsidiaries, affiliates and advertising and promotion agencies and Exposure Marketing, Inc., its respective directors, officers and employees from any and all liability for any injuries, losses or damages of any kind caused by their participation or resulting from acceptance, possession, use, or misuse of any prize; and (c) acknowledge that said parties have neither made nor are in any manner responsible or liable for any warranty, representation or guarantee, expressed or implied, in fact or in law, relative to the prizes including, but not limited to, their quality, except for the standard limited warranty provided with the prize. Noncompliance with the official rules will result in disqualification.

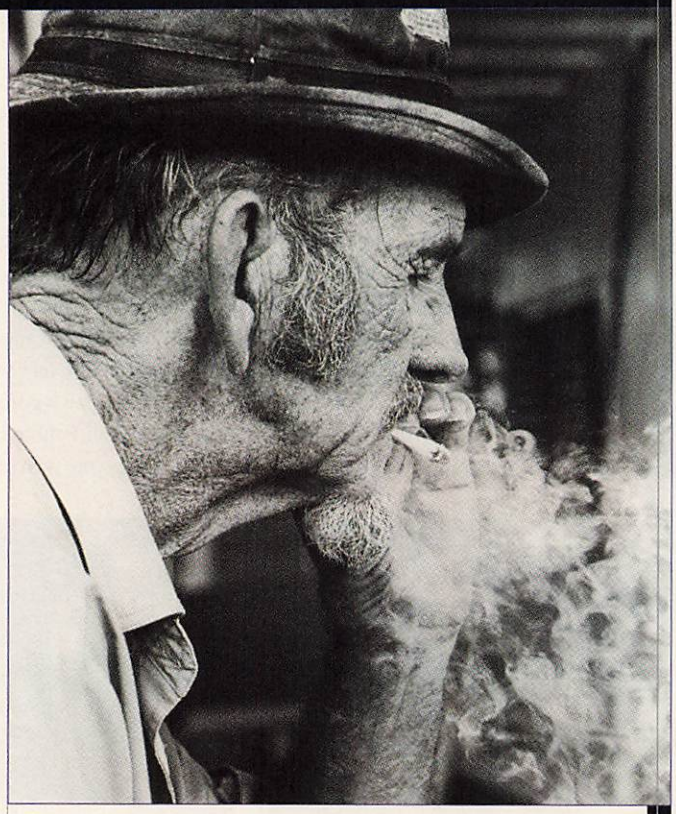
7. USE OF INFORMATION: The information obtained from the on-line Sweepstakes form will be used for the purposes of notifying the winners, awarding the prizes and providing Sponsor with valuable marketing information. You agree that Sponsor may use the information gathered about you in connection with this Sweepstakes in its "permission marketing" e-mail campaign to the extent that you have opted to participate in any of the e-mail campaigns offered by Sponsor.

8. WINNERS' LIST: For the names of major prize winners, mail a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Ford Racing 100th Anniversary Winners, P.O. Box 181, Byron, MI 48418.

9. SPONSOR: Ford Motor Company, One American Road, Dearborn, MI 48126.

THE MUSIC PRESE

A funky, spunky Web site called Hoobellatoo creates a high-tech haven for low-tech artists



They're dancing in the aisles at the Central Baptist Church in St. Louis: "Gonna rock it gonna shake it on Sunday morning!" Framed by the choir swaying behind her, Ann Pittman, 93, surveys the scene from beneath a pink feathered hat, her broad smile competing with her white sequined suit, sparkle for sparkle. For nearly four decades, Pittman has been archiving spirituals passed down in her family since slave days. Today, for the first time, she's hearing the songs performed in public by voices other than her own—a glorious sound she hopes to seed throughout churches across America. Meanwhile, her musical legacy can be heard in its unvarnished form at **Hoobellatoo [hoobellatoo.org]**, where the click of Pittman's dentures literally lays down the rhythm track on several a cappella audio files.

"I thought it would be a shame for me to leave 'em in the air and not document 'em," Pittman says of the trove of unpublished spirituals, which date back at least as far as 1838. When sung in the fields by day, the songs often harbored coded messages designed to slip past the master. "When they sang 'I'm bound for Canaan,' they meant Canada," she explains. "And they was alertin' their friend to meet 'em at a certain place." Moving not only from mouth to mouth but also from place to place, the spirituals of Pittman's ancestors—like other oral traditions around the world, from storytelling to sea chanteys—served as the unplugged precursors to online file-sharing programs. Now that spirit can be distributed in cyberspace.

Like the oral history it documents, Hoobellatoo evolved as it grew, morphing from an ad hoc field recording project into a richly textured digital outpost. The Web site houses the words and music of a growing body of elderly folk artists, captured by young roots musicians who range across the country in a mobile studio. Field notes transport you from backwoods enclaves to urban wastelands as the group seeks to preserve aging voices that might otherwise be lost.

"What isn't shared is wasted," believes the 34-year-old journalist-songwriter Chris King, who cofounded Hoobellatoo in 1997 with his longtime musical collaborator Elijah Shaw. The team launched the project after hearing an intriguing tale told by Liberian musician Nymah Kumah. Raised as a Grebo tribesman, Kumah, now 76, entered the U.S. as the virtual slave of an American missionary, became a lead dancer with Baba Olatunji's Drums of Passion, and then drifted into obscurity—but not into despair. Indeed, King and Shaw christened the site Hoobellatoo, which means "beautiful people" in the Grebo tongue, after a phrase in one of Kumah's songs.

"What really got me was when we was on the road," chuckles Jim "Pops" Farrar, 70, who picked up songs in every port during his years as a seaman. "Whenever we'd go into a McDonald's, every eye in the place would be on the three of us," he says, recalling a trip with King and Kumah (dubbed "Fish" by Farrar). "Old Fish, the jungle man. Old Chris, he had on a pair of overalls that the knee was out of. And me, dressed about like I am now," he adds, stroking a salt-and-pepper goatee beneath his captain's hat. "They'd look at us like, 'Who in the hell is this?' Three people so different-looking, and here they are buddies."

Farrar's repertoire is equally eclectic. *Memory Music: Songs and Stories From the Merchant Marine*, released on Hoobellatoo house label **www.Skuntry.com**, is a patchwork of tunes: There are Irish folk ballads, German drinking songs, and such chestnuts as "Darling Nelly Gray," which date back to the time of his father, a speakeasy troubadour. "It's a little bit of this and a little bit of that," he says of the album's 36 brief tracks, several of which can be heard on the site. "Bits and pieces almost designed, you might say, for the computer era."

Grabbing his concertina, Farrar pumps out a wheezy "Carnival of Venice" in his Belleville, Illinois, basement, where the CD was recorded. Then he switches to the accordion he bought half a century ago in Bremerhaven, Germany, and breaks into a sprightly lament for a drowned seaman. By the end of this impromptu concert, he's wielded a Cajun button squeeze-box, another piano accordion, a Jew's harp, and his ubiquitous harmonica—and larded the music with the commentary of a born raconteur.

"The virtual museum isn't really what Hoobellatoo is shooting for," says

X BY CREE McCREE

RVATION SOCIETY

Voices that carry. Pops Farrar (opposite) makes Memory Music; Ann Pittman (right) makes a joyful noise.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREA DAY

Web designer Joe Esser, who does the hands-on work of running the site in suburban New Jersey. "It's the dirty living room with the broken piano"—or, in Farrar's case, the funky basement with the working pump organ, topped by several stacks of his magic hats. "It's about taking what you couldn't get on the Internet," adds Esser, "and letting you know it's there."

But do Hoobellatoo's artists know that the Internet is there? Some are definitely in the dark, including Nymah Kumah, who is wary of technology. "Working with [Kumah] was like recording the original man," recalls King. "He absolutely wouldn't play to the microphone; he plays to the most open pair of eyes in the room. We finally had to sit right behind him with the mike." But Ann Pittman is intrigued by the Web's potential. In fact, two decades after she became the oldest-ever graduate of Saint Louis University (she was 74), she's taking a computer course. "I never dreamed this Internet thing would mean so much to me," says Pittman, whose video documentary can be purchased at her Web site, **Hand Me De Bounty Down [yil.com/annpittman]**. "This is how I make my extra money."

As for Pops Farrar's digital literacy, the cartoon taped inside his accordion case provides an interesting clue: "I think it's Grandpa's childhood computer," one little kid says to another, pointing to an accordion gathering dust in the attic. In truth, Farrar's squeeze-box remains in heavy rotation, while his first computer has been long since packed away—until tonight. "This had just come out when we got it in 1980," he says, hauling out an old Commodore VIC-20, which used a cassette recorder as a memory bank and a portable TV for a monitor. But despite being an early PC fan, he's in no hurry to go online. "When you're incapable of moving around, [the Net] could be a wonderful thing," says Farrar, who looks forward to exploring his passion for the Civil War on the Web. "But not now! Not while I'm still mobile!"

Pops is not the only Hoobellatoo artist who got a late-life career boost: Fifties R&B star Rosco Gordon recorded his first album in years for **Stony Plain Records [www.stonyplainrecords.com]** after the team put him in front of a mike in his Queens, New York, apartment. And Leo Connellan, Connecticut's late poet laureate, lived to hear his proto-Beat epic *Crossing America* transformed into a folk symphony.

Hoobellatoo is, in short, all over the map—and that's exactly where King and his colleagues want to be. "We're applying an inherently do-it-yourself artistic philosophy to an equally sloppy and homespun distribution network like the Internet," says Esser. The result is less a global village than a scattered archipelago of basements, living rooms, street corners, and churches joined by the tides of human memory.

"Do you know that after I relieved my mind of [the spirituals] I remembered real well, I remembered some I had forgotten all about?" Ann Pittman asks, shaking her head and smiling. "And the ones I had forgotten are more beautiful to me than the ones I remembered." ■

Additional reporting by Adam McGovern.

Inside Instant Messaging

Faster than a speeding e-mail, it's changed the way we communicate, and the way we deal with crisis. Just wait till you see where instant messaging is taking us next

BY JEREMY CAPLAN & DON WILLMOTT

Instant messaging is everywhere. We hesitate to say that it's all things to all people, but what else do you call something that's the centerpiece of modern teenage social life, a must-have business app, and a way to reach out to friends and family at the speed of light during the most difficult of times? The last was particularly true during the September 11 terrorist attack.

AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) [aol.com/aim] alone generates more than 650 million instant messages *daily*. Researchers predict that by 2004, IM users will be sending 7 billion messages every day. And while most of the millions of new users who sign on each month won't venture beyond simple text messaging, the latest IM software makes your current IM client look like a horse and buggy sitting next to a Lexus. Here's a look at today's IM reality, and what you can expect from it in the near future.

Cross Talk Wouldn't it be annoying if Hotmail users couldn't send e-mail to anyone who used Yahoo! Mail? Welcome to the world of IM, where AOL has maintained dominance by taking a page out of Microsoft's playbook: non-interoperability. AOL got out ahead of the other services, then bought up its nearest competitor, **ICQ [icq.com]**, to lock up 60 percent of the IM market. It's unclear whether AOL just wants to set the standard or if it aims to put its competitors out of business, but whatever the reason, AOL only lets AIM users trade messages with other AIM users.

The rest of the pack isn't taking this lying down. A surprisingly slow-moving group of AOL competitors (including Microsoft) called **IMUnified [www.imunified.org]** is trying to set standards for universal chat, putting pressure on AOL to knock down the walls around its 60 to 70 million users. They figure that if they all band together, someday AOL will have to toe the line, too. For its part, AOL has hinted that it's testing ways to let AIM and ICQ users talk to everyone else, but there's no timetable.

However, there's no need to wait for the big shots to kiss and make up. You can put away your passport and become a citizen of the world with a universal messaging client. These usually free downloadable messengers route around the limitations of individual programs to let you talk to AIM, ICQ, Yahoo! Messenger, and MSN Messenger users without switching programs. The most popular IM bridge builders include **Imici Messenger [www.imici.com]**, **Jabber [jabber.org]**, **Trillian [trillian.cc]**, and **Odigo [odigo.com]** (which did not support MSN Messenger at press time).

Calling All Chatters Those who were online five years ago may remember the "Net Phone" software packages that had the phone companies in a brief snit. Because they were complicated, hard to use, and plagued by pauses and bad sound quality (remember, 14.4Kbps was blazingly fast at the time), they never emerged as any kind of real threat—but it's time for Ma Bell to start looking over her shoulder again. IM programs are incorporating voice chat into their software, making it almost as easy to talk as to type: All you need is a computer with speakers and a microphone. MSN Messenger and AIM both let you make free calls from computer to computer, as well as calls from your PC to someone's phone with a prepaid **Net2Phone [net2phone.com]** account. Yahoo! Messenger also offers free PC-to-PC talk, with international PC-to-phone calls running 4 cents per minute.

See Me, Feel Me If you'd rather see your friends than hear them, you can do that, too. In August, Yahoo! Messenger became the first major IM service to add video capability. With decent Web cams now running as little as $30 and USB connections making them simpler than ever to set up, we may finally get those videophones *The Jetsons* promised us. Once your cam is up and running, your buddies just click on an icon near your name to see your gorgeous mug, whether you're in a private IM session or a multiperson Yahoo! chat. You can also give the power of sight to people visiting Web pages you've created in Geocities.

Have Your Agent Call My Agent Add "SmarterChild" to your buddy list on any major IM service. Then send him an IM asking the time in Tokyo; the ZIP code of Brunswick, Maine; or the number of feet in a mile. Who is SmarterChild? He's an interactive agent from **ActiveBuddy [activebuddy.com]**, a company that's making a business out of creating IM entities that serve as promotional tools. First on board: Radiohead, whose "GooglyMinotaur" buddy will answer your questions about the band, its music, and its tours. The possibilities for interactive agents are endless, with

auction updates, airline schedule changes, dictionaries, translation services, and more in the works. Your buddies may all be human today, but they won't be for long.

IM to Go Whether you know it or not, your cell phone may already be an IM pager (set it on vibrate or we'll kick you in the shins). AIM is leading the way on this one—check **AIM Service for Mobile Phones [aol.com/aim/mobile]** to see if you have the right kind of phone and service (VoiceStream or Sprint PCS is required). **MSN Mobile [mobile.msn.com]** isn't as far along. It lets your buddies send messages to your Net-ready cell phone, but you can't reply (unless you call them). Keep in mind that for now, typing words on a cell is no party. You'll have to use some pretty inventive IM shorthand to stay sane as you respond to messages.

Stay Alert You check your e-mail inbox dozens of times when you're waiting for an important document to arrive. You scan your calendar repeatedly to make sure you haven't missed any appointments. It's time to relax: Your IM program is now your information butler. Yahoo! Messenger, AIM, and MSN Messenger will all tell you when you have new e-mail on their respective services (i.e., Yahoo! Mail, AOL, and Hotmail). If you like, Yahoo! Messenger can even flash the subject line on the bottom corner of your screen. The clever little program will also let you know if the stocks you're watching have reached the buy or sell targets you've set, or if you have an appointment coming up this afternoon. If you're interested in breaking news about specific subjects (your company, your hometown team), you can arrange to receive an instant message whenever REM announces a tour, the Red Sox win, or Microsoft gets dragged back into court.

Get in the Game "Taste the pain, snookums!" "Bite my rocket launcher!" If this is typical banter for your and your buddies, you probably already know that Sony's PlayStation 2 will soon let gamers chat while playing against each other online. Today you can invite AIM buddies to play games from Hearts to Quake, talking trash as you battle. And new immersive games promise to take the power of instant messaging one step further. **Majestic [www.ea.com/worlds/games/pw_majstc00/hatted_mj20_age.jsp]**, the first of this new breed, features an intriguing cast of characters that sends you IM clues (not to mention faxes, phone calls, and e-mails) to help you solve the game's mysteries. As you're sitting down to work in the morning, a Majestic character may send you a quick note telling you to expect a phone call about a dangerous character. And you thought messages from your friends were distracting.

Dressy Messages You say the basic interface for IM programs doesn't appeal to the aesthete in you? Add some eye candy. AOL lets you assign yourself a buddy icon that your IM partners will see whenever you chat. Yahoo! Messenger lets you download skins that give your IM window a whole new face. All IM programs offer an array of emoticons, which let you wink at your buddy or smile without having to type <g>. Odigo outdoes the more popular IM clients by letting you note your mood on your profile and letting you choose avatars that reflect your personality type.

Find New Friends Catching the IM wave is no fun if you don't have anyone to talk to. If your friends haven't signed up yet, your IM service will encourage you to send them e-mail invitations, but until they get with the program, you'll need some buddies to hang with. Each IM service has its own way of matching you with pals who share your interests. Yahoo! Messenger, for example, lets you search by keyword, gender, and age range. AIM takes buddy-finding even further, letting you search from a pull-down menu within the chat client for someone with a similar interest.

Use IM at Work Bill Gates has an instant message for you: *I am that which IM.* Microsoft has chosen to integrate IM capability right into the guts of its new Windows XP operating system, to the distress of the rest of the IM market (and perhaps the Justice Department as well). While the current MSN Messenger is a text-based service, the new Windows Messenger mixes in audio, video, and telephony and seems to be designed more for business users looking for new ways to teleconference than for the Britney crowd. Forrester Research reports that 46 percent of the top 1,000 companies already use IM, and the Gartner Group has predicted that office use of IM could cut down on voice mail by 15 percent and e-mail by 40 percent. If that's true, expect to see on-the-job use of IM become official corporate policy very quickly. ■

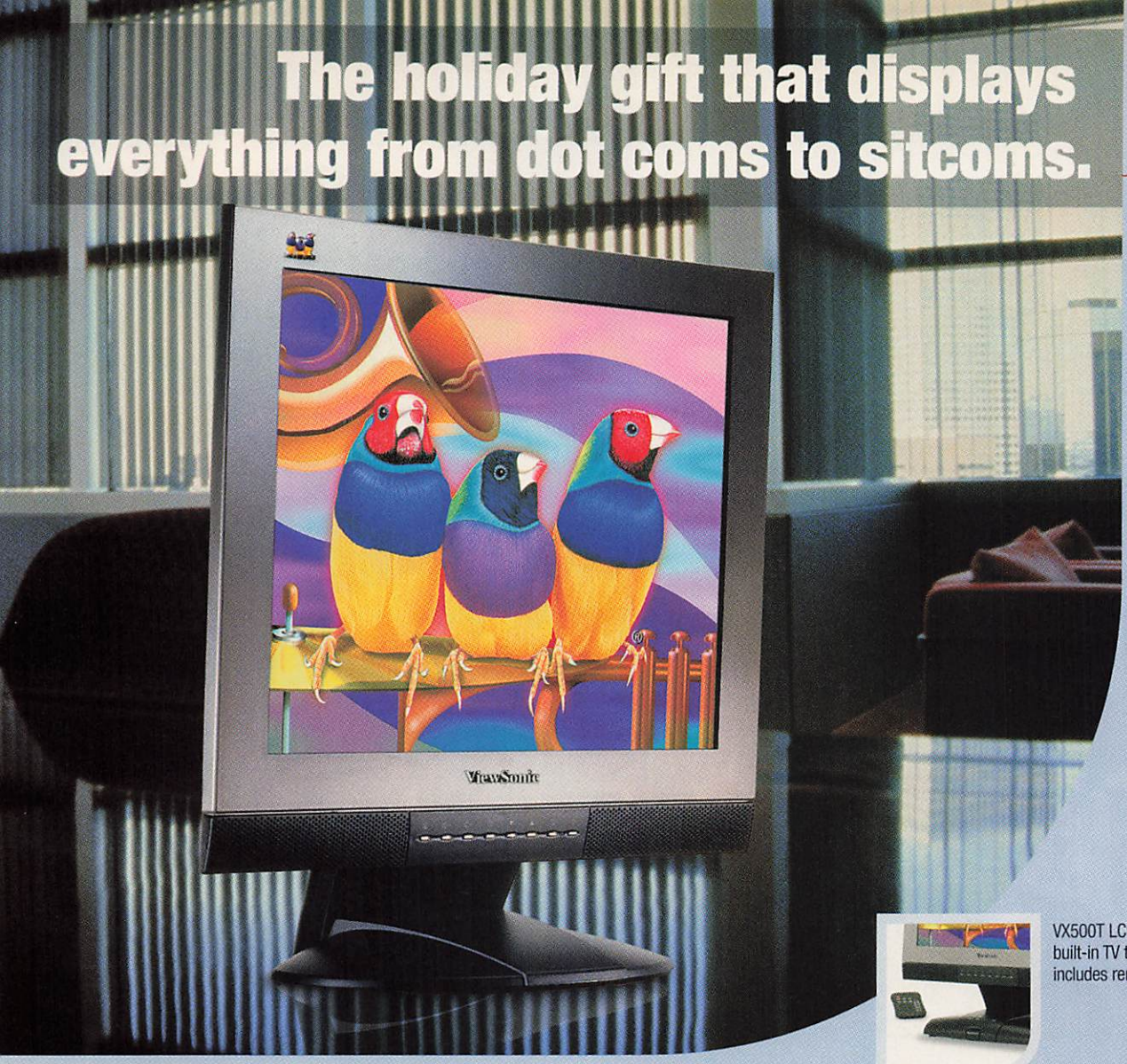
TYPHOID BUDDY? An IM virus threat is slowly emerging

IT'S A BIOLOGICAL FACT: WHERE people congregate, viruses spread. IM is no exception. Since May, relatively innocuous worms with names like Funnyfiles, Choke, Hello, and Annoying have been boring their way through the MSN Messenger system.

Like viruses borne by e-mail, IM worms tend to travel as innocent-looking files. Remember the first rule of virus safety: Only open attachments that you're expecting (with IM there's no excuse for not verifying that your pal meant to send the file you're receiving). For now, IM worms can't spread as readily as e-mail viruses because they've so far been unable to replicate by automatically sending themselves to everyone on your buddy list. Still, no one ever went broke underestimating the resourcefulness of virus writers.

And though no worms have yet been discovered in the Yahoo! Messenger or AIM services, it's probably only a matter of time before ambitious virus vandals take a crack at those as well. The lesson: There's a downside to every great notion.

The holiday gift that displays everything from dot coms to sitcoms.



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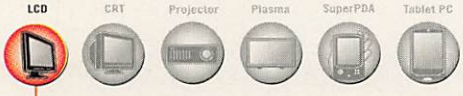

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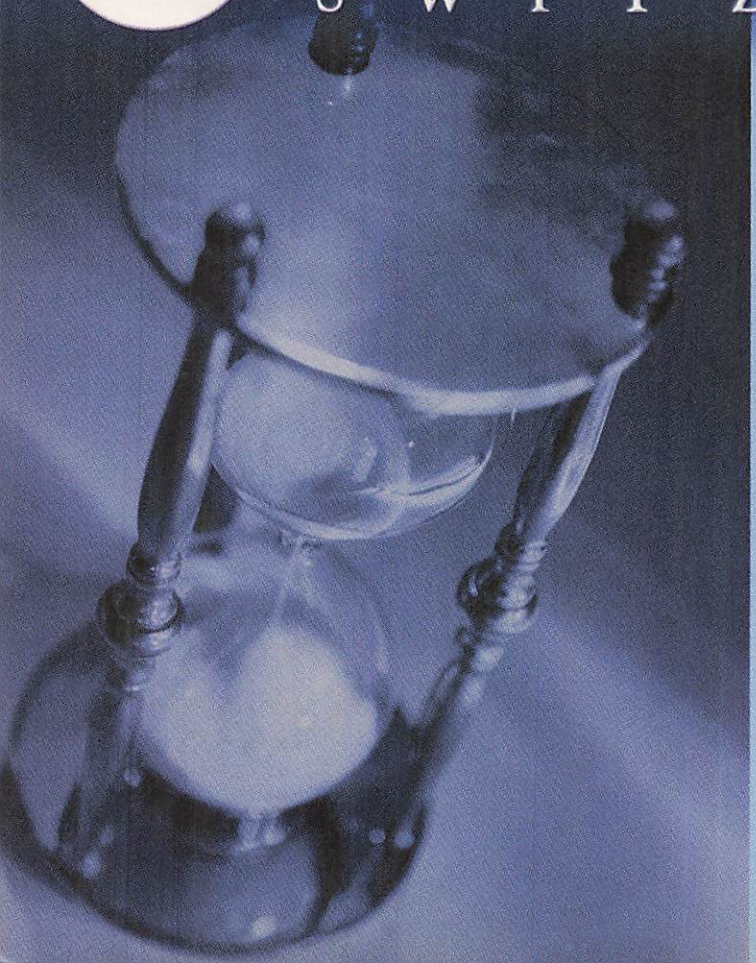

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web guide

WHERE TO, HOW TO, BEST OF: OUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO LIFE ON THE WEB EDITED BY CREE McCREE

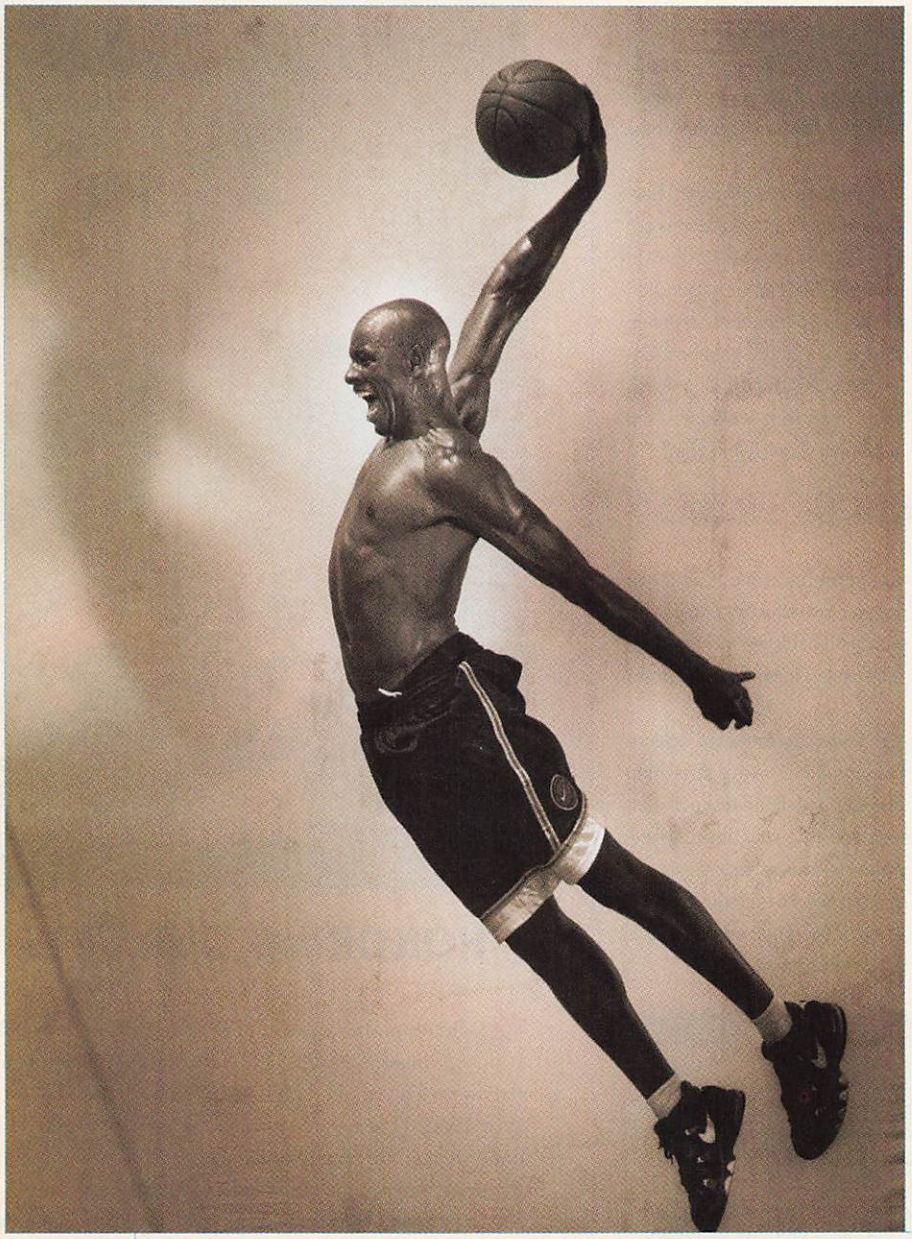

PHOTO OF GORDON WINCHESTER FROM *SOUL OF THE GAME* BY JOHN HUET

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IN DEVELOPMENT

The NBA's new eight-team farm league, the National Basketball Development League, is designed to nurture young talent. It may also help jump-start basketball's first true Internet league. Cybercasts of NBDL games begin in November. What does this augur for pro coverage on the Web? See "Hoop Streams," in Entertainment and Sports, on page 116.

web guide
new, notable & fun

WHAT'S HOT — AND COOL — ON THE WEB THIS MONTH

BY MEAGHAN O'NEILL

RELAUNCH

Business: The New York Times Upgraded tools let you scan research on more than 50,000 public companies and search mutual funds for 5,000-plus possible investments. Also new: a stock portfolio that imports customized financial data for you. **[nytimes.com/pages/business]**

Bloomingdale's The redesigned online department store now offers fashion tips, editorial content, and new brand-specific boutiques including DKNY, Ralph Lauren, and Lancôme. Access catalog items by typing in reference numbers. **[bloomingdales.com]**

Wine.com by eVineyard Having acquired both the Wine.com and WineShopper.com domain names, eVineyard, Inc. relaunched its site, becoming a huge online source for spirited libations. Enhancements include tasting charts, books, more wine accessories, and additional clubs. **[wine.com]**

KIDS & TEENS

Sport Monkeys: The Extreme Sock Jocks How a sock monkey evolved from a poor boy's toy into an Olympic athlete is a long story, but the exploits of these scooter-crossing, gymno-racing woolly primates will make youngsters smile. **[sportmonkeys.com]**

Voice Interactiv.com Violence Overcome in Creative Ensemble provides a platform for youth and women living with abuse to express themselves through writing and artwork. Learn more from the video documentaries on the site. **[voiceinteractiv.com]**

PORTAL PATROL

People who like to get their Yahoo! Mail by telephone can now get a few enhancements for their $4.95 per month. Retrieve e-mail over the phone at Yahoo! by Phone [phone.yahoo.com] and receive e-mail alerts when new messages appear in their voice mailboxes.

Just what are people searching for online? Google Zeitgeist [google.com/press/zeitgeist.html] has the scoop. The page indicates the top 10 gaining and declining inquiries for the week, the top five misspelled words, and other trivia.

AOL and Eastman Kodak have relaunched their joint You've Got Pictures service. AOL members can upload and store an unlimited number of photos, plus drop off regular film to participating Kodak retailers, who will print and e-mail pictures to you for a single fee of $8.99.

SPOTLIGHT

HONORING OUR VETS

Eight years after the end of World War I on November 11, 1918, Congress established Armistice Day to commemorate those who risked their lives in the hostilities. Following World War II, it was renamed Veterans Day to extend the honor to all military personnel who fought for our country. For more background and a gallery of patriotic posters, visit the **Department of Veteran Affairs Veterans Day Home Page [www.va.gov/pubaff/vetsday]**. **VFW: Veterans of Foreign Wars [vfw.org]** points to a fine selection of sites devoted to WWII, Korea, and Vietnam—including the striking **Vietnam Women's Memorial Project [vietnamwomensmemorial.org]**. More recent military history is recapped in **Fog of War [washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/fogofwar/fogofwar.html]**, a *Washington Post* compilation of articles and images from Desert Storm.

SPORT MONKEY: EYELUMINATION.COM; VETERAN: PETE SOUZA/NEWSCOM

NEWS AND VIEWS FOR HIGH-SPEED SURFERS

ENTERTAINMENT

Doctor Who: Death Comes to Time Sci-fi and fantasy fans longing to travel back to an era before *The X-Files* and *Xena: Warrior Princess* won't want to miss the BBC's new *Doctor Who* animated series, featuring the Time Lord and his fearless crew. Hardcore enthusiasts can revisit clips and characters from the original TV program. **[www.bbc.co.uk/cult/doctorwho/death]**

The Just So Review Computer gamers will dig the straight-up opinions dished out here—as long as they can take the offhanded, long-winded humor that comes with the turf. One recent review was titled "Our Almost Embarrassingly Strong Feelings About Hostile Waters: Antaeus Rising." **[justso.org]**

NATURE

eNature.com: Backyard Wildlife Habitat Looking to beautify your environs? Come here for inspiration. Learn how to attract butterflies and birds, grow wildflowers, and build a pond. When spring rolls around, you'll be ready to break ground—and use the feature that lets you post details about your own ecosystem on a personal Web page. **[enature.com/backyardwildlife]**

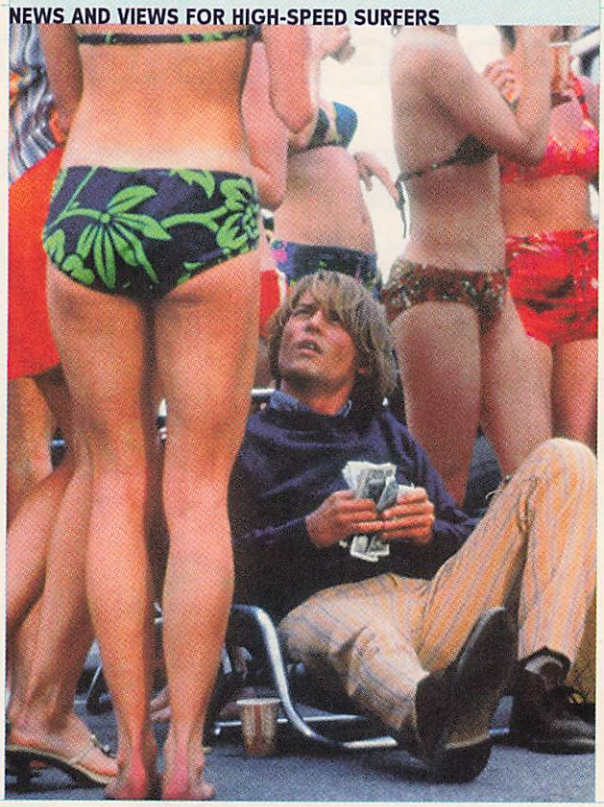
NationalGeographic.com: Eye in the Sky Observe Earth from celestial satellites, and experience the fury of tornadoes, hurricanes, and earthquakes via video, still images, and text. Also on view from above: the wages of war, human impact on the environment, and Mars explorations. **[nationalgeographic.com/eye]**

TRAVEL

Disney World: The Online Guide Use this unofficial travel guide to plan your vacation to the land of Mickey Mouse. Browse the Save Money section for advice on how to budget your trip and which passes to buy once you're there. Also get tips on resorts, dining, and free family activities. **[wdisneyw.co.uk]**

GoNomad.com If traditional sight-seeing makes you yawn, consider planning an alternative vacation that emphasizes "sustainable and responsible tourism." Suggestions here include learning Mayan weaving or volunteering in Nepal. Special tabs are devoted to solo female travel and adventurous families. **[gonomad.com]**

Photographic Memories For the past 10 years, photographer Alain Schneuwly documented his travels throughout the world. Take a thought-provoking jaunt through his portfolios, which range from the mysterious Tibetan highlands to the deserts of Morocco to islands off the coast of Norway. **[schneuwly.com]**



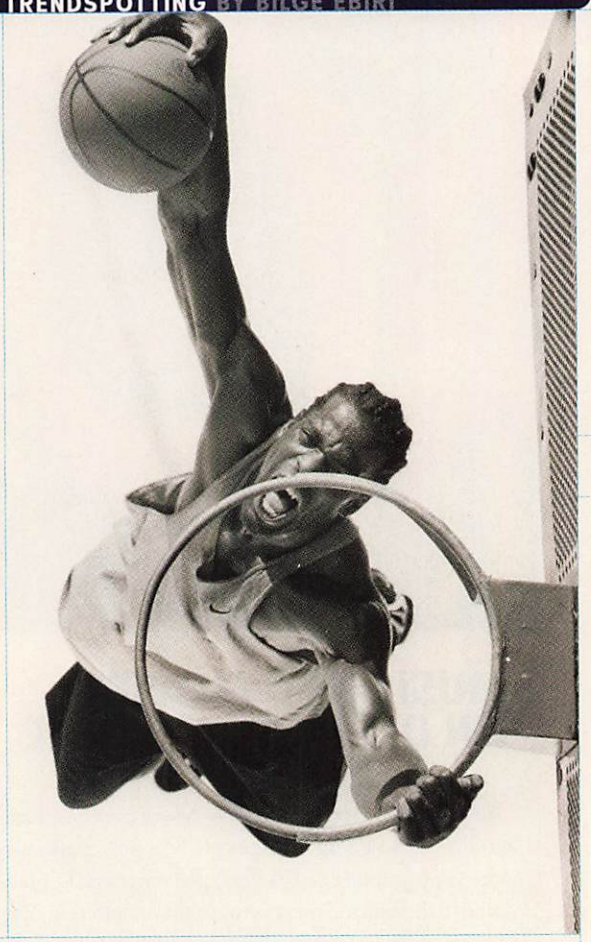
MUSIC AND MOVIES ON DEMAND, ANYTIME

Upgrade to version 6.1 of **Musicmatch [musicmatch.com]**, and you can sign up for Radio MX, a subscription service ($4.95/month; $39.95/year) that streams CD-quality tunes to broadband users without ads or buffering delays. Listen to professionally programmed stations, or set up your own based on your favorite genres. Choose the personalization service to have Musicmatch add songs it thinks you'll like to the mix. The coolest feature: stations you can set up by era or year. Imagine shaking your groove thing to all summer of 1978 all the time!

If you don't want to trek all the way down to the video store and are willing to watch a new release on your computer, check out the available titles at **Intertainer [www.intertainer.tv]**, which rents movies on demand for about $3.95. Your 24-hour viewing pass comes with VCR-like controls, so you can pause and rewind the full-screen image. The site also has hundreds of TV episodes, concerts, and free music videos to enjoy. The bad news: Intertainer isn't available everywhere. Use the sign-up screen to see if your broadband provider offers the service now—or to be notified when it does. DON WILLMOTT

JOHNNY DEPP, SCOTT: FOTO FANTASIES; LEVY: ROBERT MADDEN/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

TRENDSPOTTING BY BILGE EBIRI



HOOP STREAMS

A new NBA league may hold the key to sports on the Web

The National Basketball Association made history in April by Webcasting a live video stream of the Dallas Mavericks playing the Sacramento Kings. The window was small, the stream was jerky, and the traffic made for lots of glitches, but overall—since the league was merely exploring the viability of the medium—it was a success. This November, it plans to test the Webcasting waters further with the debut of the eight-team National Basketball Development League, or **NBDL [nbdl.com]**.

During the NBDL's 56-game inaugural season, the NBA plans to stream live video of several matches every week. Given the relative lack of star power associated with the fledgling league—which is based in hoops-deprived southeastern cities and is designed to nurture young talent—the Webcasts are unlikely to generate the kind of media coverage that the Mavs-Kings game did. But they will probably prove significant as a way for the NBA to assess the feasibility of video streams over a period of time, away from the spotlight and the need for immediate results.

Does this mean that fans can look forward to streams of pro games? Owing to big-time TV contracts, there are still no plans to cybercast live video of the NBA season, but experimental feeds might happen here and there. Much could hinge on the success of the NBDL cybercasts. The NBDL "will be the first true Internet league," said NBA spokeswoman Brenda Spoonemoore in April. By the spring, we'll know if she was right, and what it all might mean.

FOOTBALL

NFL CHEERLEADERS

HONG KONG ACTION

Denver Broncos: Cheerleaders As the pep squad backing one of the top football teams of the last decade, these gals have plenty to shout about. So do fans of the Broncos boosters who visit their online home. Standard squad pictures and bios are augmented with a photo gallery of the women celebrating the Chinese New Year in Hong Kong and RealPlayer footage of them learning tai chi. **[denverbroncos.com/cheerleaders]**

BEHIND THE POM-POMS

Atlanta Falcons.com: Cheerleaders If you've always wondered about the secret life of cheerleaders, this is your site. Peruse a rookie's journal from training camp, read Nina Ahlin's Pro Bowl diary from Hawaii, and tour the photo gallery of auditions for the 2001-02 season—a narrative in pictures, culminating in a group shot of the lineup for fall. Then check the team's schedule so you can go see them in the flesh. **[atlantafalcons.com/cheerleaders]**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

About: Cheerleading: Whose Cheerleaders Are These? Now here's a pop quiz we're happy to take: Scrutinize photos of pro pepsters in their uniforms and pick

BASKETBALL PLAYER: JOHN WHITE; CHEERLEADERS: TRINETTE REED/CORBIS

the appropriate team from four choices. There's no prize for high marks, but fans with perfect scores can savor a swelling sense of pride. [cheerleading.about.com/library/weekly/aa122300a.htm]

PEP PORTAL

NFL Cheerleader Links One man's single-minded devotion has produced a comprehensive index of some 100 official and unofficial resources on the Web. The site's barebones design won't make you stand up and cheer, but you weren't really looking for attractive page layouts, were you? [angelfire.com/nj/nflcheer] BRYAN VANDYKE

GUEST GUIDE

V.I.P. STAR LEAH LAIL

On *V.I.P.*, Lail plays keyboard jockey Kay Simmons, who uses her hacker skills to help Pam Anderson and the rest of her bodyguard pals. In real life, Lail loves to surf the Web on her tangerine iBook and uncover these sites:

TIMOTHY McSWEENEY'S The heartbreaking genius of author Dave Eggers and company helm this sassy site. Wicked, wicked fun! [mcsweeneys.net]

AMAZON.COM I actually spend a sizable percentage of my income on this one site alone. As I am not the computer wizard I play on *V.I.P.*, I sincerely appreciate how my friends at Amazon make it easy for me. [amazon.com]

THE OFFICIAL JONATHAN CARROLL WEB SITE My favorite writer has a fabulous site that visually captures the surreal nature of his magical realist style. [jonathancarroll.com]

U2.COM Truth be told, I am a screaming groupie at heart. I loved U2 first and best of all! [u2.com]

VERTICAL HORIZON Can't a girl have a guilty pleasure? [verticalhorizon.com] PAUL SEMEL

POP CULTURE

COMICS

FRESH DAILY

uComics.com "The Best Comics Site in the Universe" delivers free funnies to your desktop daily, from such classics as *Dick Tracy* and such modern faves as *Doonesbury* to the online-only antics of the redoubtable *Captain RibMan*. We're especially fond of Dan Piraro's offbeat *Bizarro*: "I'm afraid your CAT scan confirmed the worst," a doctor tells his patient. "Your toupée is made of cat fur." [ucomics.com]

CAT'S PAJAMAS

Comics.com Speaking of felines, you can find plenty of 'em here—along with dozens of other toons. There's the charming *Heathcliff*, as well as *9 Chickweed Lane*, with that wacky ballerina and her scrawny Siamese preener. Darby Conley's *Get Fuzzy* plumbs Bucky Katt's psyche with uncanny catnip-inspired insight. E-mail any of the comics to a downcast pal. [comics.com]

SAD SACK

The Hotel Fred Follow the serial misadventures of Fred, the Eeyore of clowns. British creator Roger Langridge updates the strip every Monday, which means you can keep up with his hapless protagonist's mistakes with women, problems at work, and social faux pas. Some of Fred's "Reasons to be Cheerful": having silly notions, living near the ocean, regular bowel motions, and beans on toast. [www.zoo.co.uk/~z8000585]

SPACE COWBOY

The Crater Kid Head here for a dose of the deceptively adorable Kid, an intergalactic buccaneer. Fifties beat culture merges with ersatz high-tech toys on a distant planet, and the Kid is compelled to figure out what really matters. Browse the archives to get hooked on this wise little dude's back-to-the-future trip into modern American life. [craterkid.com] PAMELA DES BARRES

STYLE

FASHION SITES

VIP PASS

Fashion Live For those with a passion for the runway, this site is the next best thing to a front-row seat. Not only can you peek at top models parading the latest styles, but you can also get a sense of the excitement that surrounds big shows around the world. With candid photos of celebrities, video clips of after-show parties, and interviews with top designers, the site is as unpredictable as a new Issey Miyake collection, yet as easy to use as ready-to-wear. [fashionlive.com]

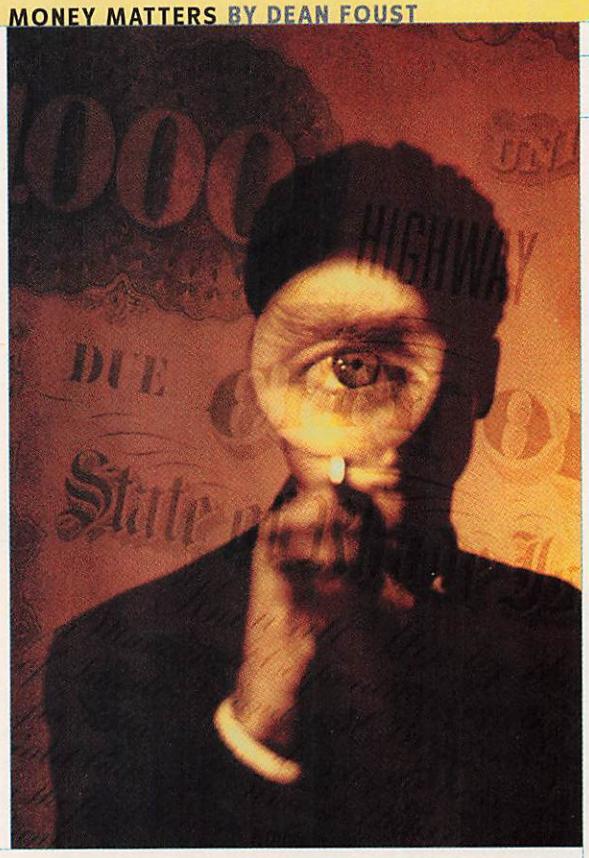
WALK-IN CLOSET

FirstView Fashion is fickle. FirstView knows how important it is for style mavens to remain up-to-date, and it charges admission for a password to the latest collections by hundreds of international designers. To whet your appetite for the current crop, the site offers encyclopedic catalogs of previous collections gratis. Browsing through past years' hits is nearly as much fun as invading the closet of your favorite clotheshorse. [firstview.com] FRANK GREEN

LAIL: RON DAVIS/SHOOTING STAR; HOTEL FRED: © ROGER LANGRIDGE 2001

web guide
money & shopping

MONEY MATTERS BY DEAN FOUST



CAVEAT POSTER

Watch what you say on investing boards

In years past, a lot of investing message boards resembled the Wild West, with posters gleefully shooting down stocks. No more. Fed up with what they consider "cybersmear" campaigns by investors looking to profit by driving stock prices down, many companies are moving to muzzle online critics. Some are retaining services such as **eWatch [ewatch.com]** to monitor boards for negative postings. Others are going to court. E*Trade and the New York Stock Exchange have filed lawsuits against posters who had been posing as the chief executives of those organizations.

Given the litigious climate, sites are also monitoring their own boards more closely. **Vault [vault.com]**, for instance, has made it more difficult to create more than one screen name—and hence give the illusion that an expressed sentiment is pervasive.

So far, most courts have sided with the posters. But message-board mavens should be mindful of what they say. "Don't claim to have inside, factual information that isn't true," says David Sobel, an attorney with the Washington-based Electronic Privacy Information Center. "And never pretend you're the CEO."

INVESTING

GOING GLOBAL

FIRST STOP

WorldlyInvestor.com If you're feeling whipsawed by the U.S. stock market and want to broaden your horizons, consider investing in foreign stocks. When you're ready to go global, start here. The site offers daily analysis of everything from British banking to funds that let you play on the potential reopening of Cuba. **[worldlyinvestor.com]**

PERSONAL GUIDE

About: Investing: Global Markets About guide Raymond Resendes points to primers that demystify such tricky topics as buying yen-denominated bonds and picking offshore tax havens. **[investingglobal.about.com]**

ONLINE TRADES

IntlTrader.com; iShares Ready to dive in? IntlTrader lets you trade global stocks online for $15 to $30—a fraction of what you'd pay other brokers, with free real-time quotes. But be forewarned: Buying individual foreign equities is risky. Many experts recommend purchasing iShares, new exchange-traded funds that track more than 50 international indexes. **[intltrader.com]; [ishares.com]** D.F.

COST OF LIVING

ENERGY SAVING

PUMP 'N' SAVE

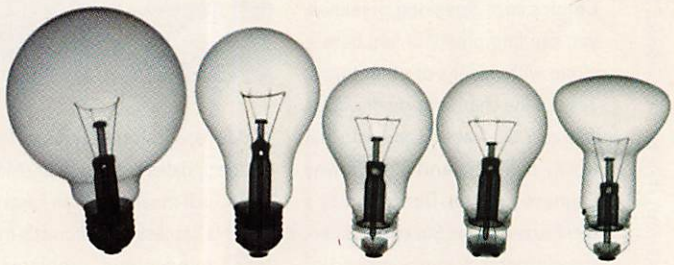
GasPriceWatch.com; Bankrate.com: Calculators GasPriceWatch aims to find you the cheapest source of fuel within a 20-mile radius of any ZIP code in the U.S. But would that drive across town be worth it? Bankrate's calculator can tell you how much you would save, or lose, by making the trip. **[www.gaspricewatch.com]; [bankrate.com/brm/calc/gasprice.asp]**

CUT CONSUMPTION

Sensible Home: Cut Your Utility Bills; Energycheckup.com At Sensible Home, syndicated columnist James Dulley offers such energy-saving tips as periodically draining your water heater to release deposits. Energycheckup lists average monthly costs for using appliances. **[dulley.com]; [www.energycheckup.com]**

CUT COSTS

LowerMyBills.com Give LowerMyBills your ZIP code, and the site will let you look for a better deal from whichever of its 25 participating energy providers operates in your neighborhood. **[lowermybills.com]** D.F.



MAN: LACAGNINA ABRAMS/GETTYONE; LIGHTBULBS: UNTITLED/NONSTOCK

For more cost-cutting tips, see "Don't Click Twice, It's All Right," page 102.

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THE HOME FRONT BY CHRISTY EPSTEIN

FAMILY TIES

Relatives who click together stick together—on their own home page

Whether you're a faithful record-keeper who sends out an annual holiday newsletter or the type who sticks old photos in a shoebox under the bed, creating a family home page is the modern way to organize your clan's memories and keep far-flung relatives up-to-date. And you don't have to hire a laid-off dot-commer to make your site become a reality.

Most of the popular Web communities, such as **Yahoo! GeoCities [geocities.yahoo.com]** and **Homestead [homestead.com]**, provide step-by-step page builders with a variety of templates from which to choose. Traditionally such services have been free, but Homestead recently started charging fees of around $10 per month (or less, for longer-term payment plans); other sites might follow suit. **AOL Hometown [hometown.aol.com]** offers the most diversity—more than 100 designs. Wherever you stake your claim, with prefab pages you can be up and running in a matter of minutes—a good option for the shoebox stashers with little time to spare.

In most cases, more-ambitious do-it-yourselfers can get free server space from their Internet service provider. If you decide to build a site from scratch, it's a good idea to map out the pages on graph paper before you do the actual HTML scripting. If this is your first attempt at Web design, don't quit now. HTML only sounds daunting, and online resources abound. We recommend **HTML Primer [htmlprimer.com]** and **HTML: An Interactive Tool for Beginners [davesite.com/webstation/html].**

SOCIAL DANCING

TANGO

GLOBAL LINKS

Bridge to the Tango After a few decades of relative obscurity, tango has taken the world by storm again. Aficionados hail from as far as the Netherlands and Singapore, as well as being scattered throughout the U.S.

BOYS: ZEFA/PHOTONICA

This gateway connects you to local clubs, major festivals, and tango tours. Try Havana or the mecca itself: Buenos Aires. [bridgetothetango.com]

STEP BY STEP

Tango City Produced by Argentines who run a televised tango channel and radio station, this site lets you listen, watch, and learn. Audio files spout sizzling music, while streaming video clips present dancers onstage and in the *milongas*. The big bonus for beginners: Shockwave tango lessons, illustrated step by step. [tangocity.com]

CLASSIC ARTISTS

Todo Tango It may be pro forma to feature a photo of the near-mythic Carlos Gardel on the front page of a tango site, but you can also find vintage sound clips of the legendary singer here, along with scans of actual sheet music from some of the best and oldest tangos. [todotango.com] ABOU FARMAN

FAMILY SERVICES

ELDER CARE

START HERE

ElderWeb This award-winning site is beautifully organized to help professionals and families navigate the elder care labyrinth. Check Living Arrangements for good general advice on housing options; then peruse the regional directory to locate facilities nearby. The Finance and Law section can help with covering the costs. Sign up for the free newsletter to get all the facts, such as how the new tax bills expand pension options for seniors. [elderweb.com]

FEDERAL GATEWAY

Administration on Aging: Elder Page It may not win any design awards, but this no-frills government site is a valuable tool. Use the Eldercare Locator to access a nationwide directory of support resources. The copious links include FirstGov for Seniors, which acts as a portal to other useful agencies. [aoa.gov/elderpage.html]

PEER SUPPORT

ElderCare Online Here you'll find chatrooms and discussion groups ranging from Caregiver Respite to Healing Loss. Stop by the message board to post and read thoughts about caregiving, which often has a poignantly funny side. Link to the sister site ALZwell Caregiver Support for advice on dementia. [ec-online.net] ANN FARMER

FOOD & DRINK

GREAT DESSERTS

GRAND FINALES

FabulousFoods.com "Desserts are the crowning glory to the holiday meal," notes site editor Cheri Sicard, who puts her honey where her mouth is with a bountiful list of Thanksgiving treats. Seasonal offerings include Spicy Pumpkin Indian Pudding and good old Apple Pandowdy. But why not go out on a limb and try the Blue Cheese Walnut Tart or the Pecan Pizza? [fabulousfoods.com]

EASY AS PIE

Simply Recipes Divine denouements to your feast don't have to be major productions. The fruit desserts here offer an array of yummy possibilities, including Apricot Custard, Rum-Sauced Bananas, and Pavlova, a chichi but easy-to-make meringue concoction. [simply-recipes.com]

LUXE & LUSCIOUS

Epicurious Rich fare from the pages of *Bon Appetit* and *Gourmet* includes New-Fashioned Apple Pie spiked with Grand Marnier. Transform another traditional classic by treating your guests to a Pumpkin Cheesecake with Bourbon Sour Cream Topping. [epicurious.com] PAMELA DES BARRES

SPOTLIGHT BY HEIDI LAFLECHE

CORBIS/BETTMANN

TALKING TURKEY

Bird is the word on Thanksgiving

NATIONAL TURKEY FEDERATION: CONSUMER Browse a database of 500 recipes for such tasty surprises as turkey fajitas. [www.turkeyfed.org/consumer/main.html]

ABOUT: VEGETARIAN THANKSGIVING Flip the bird to eating meat with About guide Tiffany Refior's holiday suggestions. Don't knock tofurky if you haven't tried it (tastes like chicken). [vegetarian.about.com/library/holidays/blthanksgiving.htm]

FARM SANCTUARY: SHELTER & ADOPTIONS The rescue organization that runs this site says turkeys "love to be stroked, just like cats." Sponsor a bird by donating $10 per month, or adopt one into your home—if it won't ruffle your neighbors' feathers. [farmsanctuary.org/adopt/sponsor.htm]

STU'S WILD TURKEY HUNTING SCHOOL State your intentions in the native tongue before you pull that trigger! Grand Gobbler Stu Keck shares his turkey-calling techniques on this site, which features sound files for the cluck, chirp, putt, poopoo, mating yelp, and other popular calls. [bowhunting.net/naspecies/calling.htm]

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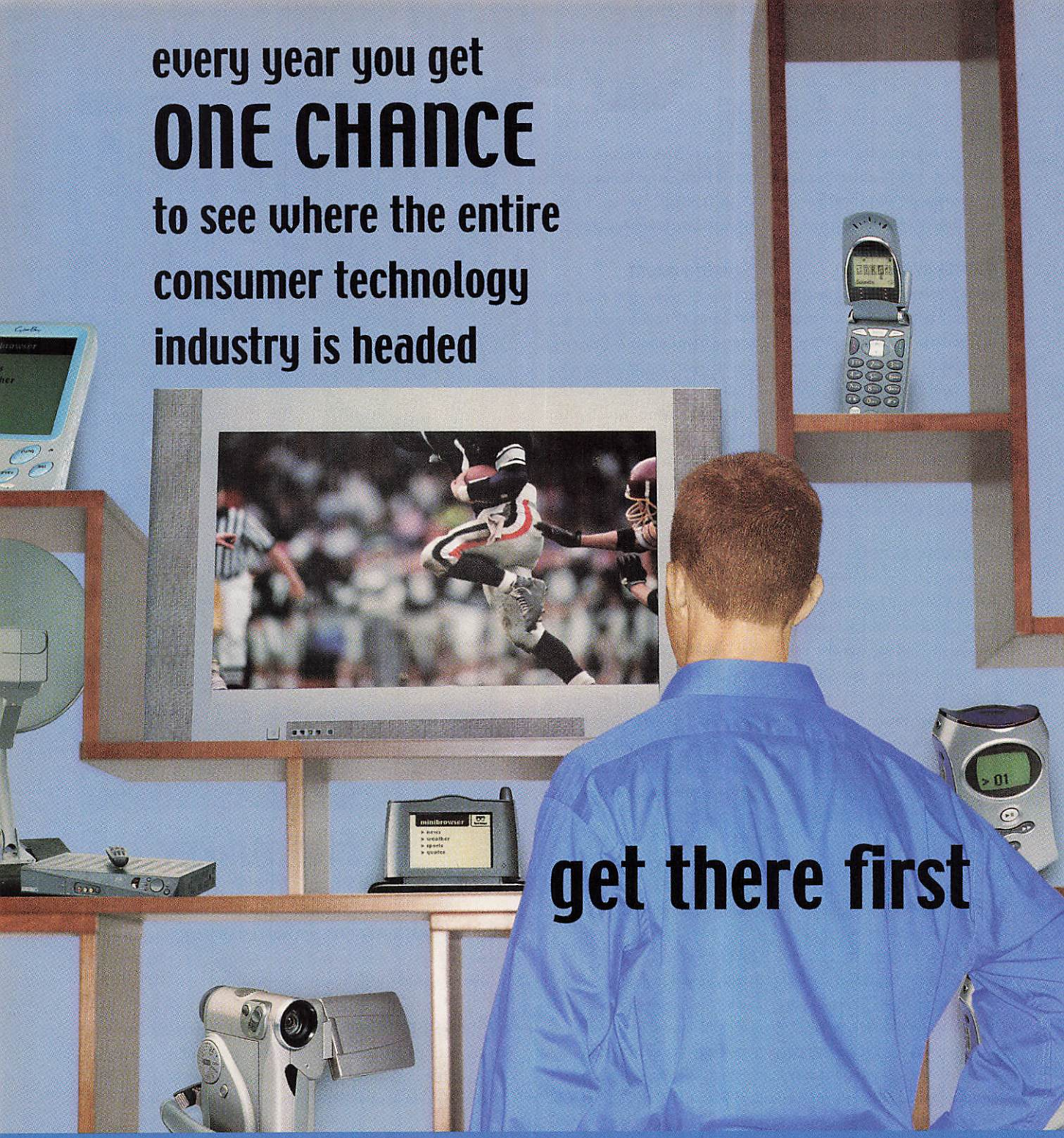

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WE TEST ONE CATEGORY IN DEPTH...ENVELOPES, PLEASE BY ALAN COHEN

BEST SHOPPING SERVICES

KEVIN MACKINTOSH/STONE

Even in times of change, some things stay the same. Consider today's most popular online merchants: Alongside relative newcomers such as **Amazon.com** are names that your grandparents know from childhood, including JCPenney and Sears. The dubious business models may be gone, but Net shopping is alive and kicking. It's just that it's being driven by a lot of old companies.

Is this bad news? Only if you miss that talking sock puppet. The Net stores that have endured are simply better at their game. Dot-coms such as Amazon are still around because they've been able to master the complicated logistics of fulfilling orders. The old-timers have prospered because they learned those skills back in the '50s, with catalogs and phone sales. The result: a generally happier buying experience, with quicker deliveries and fewer mistakes.

Still, not all sites are equal. We took five of the Web's busiest shopping destinations and put them to the test, asking questions, ordering products, and (reluctantly) returning goods. While all did a bang-up job getting products to us quickly, there were some differences, and they were telling. Stores such as **CDNow [cdnow.com]** excelled at providing an interactive user experience, with product listings chock-full of reviews and links to related items. Traditional retailers such as **Walmart.com** leveraged their brick-and-mortar operations to offer hassle-free returns: Don't feel like shipping an unwanted item back? Just take it to your local store for a refund.

To help you branch out, we've also sought out the best price-finders, bargain-hunting sites, and shopping hubs, among other resources. Your next great deal is just a few clicks away.

AND THE WINNERS ARE . . .

BEST ONLINE STORE

AMAZON.COM

[amazon.com]

Okay, so handing out a best-store award to Amazon is like handing out an Oscar to Tom Hanks: big surprise. But the fact is, both Hanks and Amazon work very hard to stay on top. While other e-tailers have made long strides in service, none can touch Amazon when it comes to the overall shopping experience. Product selection is jaw-droppingly varied—no other site will let you toss both a Tom Clancy novel *and* a brand-new automobile into your cart. Prices are generally good, and even better if you take advantage of special promotions. Almost all items are graced with user ratings, and many have links to used versions of the product, in case you'd like to save a few bucks. Even the site's formerly maligned recommendation generator has earned its stripes, serving up (mostly) on-target suggestions. Our experience wasn't gripe-free, alas: E-mailed product inquiries went unanswered (previously, the site was always quick to reply). Overall, however, Amazon remains the champ.

BEST PRICE FINDER

PRICEGRABBER.COM

[pricegrabber.com]

Love that PlayStation? Sure, but you'd love it even more for $10 less. Price finders check with multiple merchants, telling you who's offering the best deal. PriceGrabber does that job just fine, in categories that include books, computers, electronics, movies, and software. But what sets it apart are the extras, such as links to product reviews, manufacturer rebates, and user feedback for merchants. This last feature is particularly handy, as many of the stores that PriceGrabber searches are small-scale operations you probably haven't dealt with before. If you don't know exactly what you're looking for, you can click down to the appropriate subcategory (say, digital cameras) and select the criteria you care about most (for example, image resolution). PriceGrabber then finds matching products and compares the costs.

BEST SHOPPING HUB

YAHOO! SHOPPING

[shopping.yahoo.com]

"Shopping hub" used to be a fancy

name for a page of links to stores. Today, the major portals offer more, such as buyers' guides and express checkout for select merchants. Yahoo! Shopping gives the most bang for that buck you're about to spend. (And no, this isn't a family plug; we license the Yahoo! name but are editorially independent.) Like its rivals AOL and MSN, Yahoo! will hook you up with the usual big-name retailers. Unlike them, it will also steer you toward the mom-and-pop operations, where you may find a better buy—or that hard-to-find item. Any merchant with a virtual storefront on Yahoo! (and there are thousands) can become part of its network. Searches are easy, and you can quickly compare prices (including shipping and tax) and merchant ratings. After you place your order, you can track its status from your My Shopping page—leaving you more time to buy more stuff.

BEST BARGAIN-HUNTER SITE

TECHBARGAINS.COM

[techbargains.com]

Good service and quick delivery aren't the only ways in which stores can woo you. Often, the incentive is directed at your wallet: free shipping, cash rebates, and so on. To get these deals, however, you have to know the right code and key it in when you check out. A number of sites list promotional codes, but Techbargains does them one better; often it links you to manufacturer rebates for even greater savings. When we went looking for a 128MB CompactFlash card, the site steered us toward a good deal at Amazon: $100, minus a $25 manufacturer rebate, minus $15 for an Amazon promotion, for a total cost of $60. Then it tossed in free shipping. We were sold—as will you be. And don't be fooled by the name: Techbargains has deals at such sites as **Barnes&Noble.com [bn.com]** and **Staples.com**, too.

BEST PRODUCT REVIEWS

EPINIONS.COM

[www.epinions.com]

A good price is cold comfort if you've just bought the world's lamest camcorder. How do you weed out the lemons? Easy: Find people who have already done the weeding. At Epinions, you can read lengthy product reviews on just about anything ever shipped past a factory door,

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THE BASICS	SELECTION	SERVICE	RETURNS	TOOLS	OVERALL
AMAZON.COM [amazon.com]	Other sites can match, and often beat, Amazon's prices. None, however, can match the variety—breadth and depth—of goods it has for sale. A-	E-mail when order received—link to cancel; shipping notification; prompt delivery. Some items shipped free. No response to product inquiry. B+	You've got 30 days to ship stuff back. Return Center lets you print out a prepaid mailing label; postage is deducted from your refund. B	Detailed product descriptions, with links to reviews, used versions, recommendations. Wish lists can be shared. Shopping Cart holds items for 90 days. A+	A-
WALMART.COM [walmart.com]	Many categories, generally with deep inventories. But iffy on older books, CDs. What is here is often cheaper than at Amazon or Barnes&Noble. B+	E-mail sent when order received; shipping notification; prompt delivery; quick response to product inquiry, though answer was incorrect. B+	Prepaid return-shipping label in the box (the site picks up the charge); liberal time limits for unopened items. Or, return to any local Wal-Mart store. A+	No wish list, user comments, or links to related items; cursory product descriptions. Gift registries must be created in a Wal-Mart store (not on site). C	B+
BARNES&NOBLE.COM [bn.com]	Mostly books, movies, music. Often cheaper than Amazon on new releases, pricier on older books. DVDs cheaper at Walmart.com (but fewer choices). B	E-mail sent when order received and shipped. Off-base response to product inquiry, but big points for free shipping and next-day delivery. B+	Within 30 days, you can ship back to site (on your own dime) for a refund, or return your stuff to a local outlet for store credit. B	Product listings supplemented by editor picks. Info can be extensive (music) or terse (DVDs). Far fewer user reviews than Amazon; can't share wish list. B-	B
CDNOW [cdnow.com]	Limited to music and movies. CDs less than at other outlets, but not cheapest on the Web. Fewer DVDs than Amazon, but bigger discounts on preorders. B	E-mail sent when order received and shipped. Sent CDs and DVDs from different locations and charged us extra (lame). Savvy reply to product inquiry. B-	Can return only unopened CDs—within 30 days. If items came from different locations, they must be sent back to different locations (very lame). C	Extensive music gossip, news, reviews, interviews, and message boards, all well-linked from artist pages. Can create and share wish lists. B	B-
JCPENNEY [jcpenney.com]	Many categories; not all fare equally (6 digital cameras, 34 types of slippers). Doesn't accept DVD preorders; Sega Dreamcast overpriced by $20. B-	E-mail sent when order received, but not when shipped. We were told someone would get back to us on our product inquiry; no one did. Prompt delivery. C+	Can return to any JCPenney store for refund or credit, or ship back to site at your expense. Only time limit is for furniture (must return within 7 days). B+	Sparse product information. No wish list, no user reviews. Can search for something specific by JCPenney catalog number, but that's about it. D+	C+

HOW WE RATED THE SITES: We ordered and returned multiple items from each online merchant, gauging the speed (and accuracy) of deliveries and the ease (or pain) of returns. We also sent simple product inquiries. If there was no reply, we re-sent the query, to ensure the silence wasn't because of a technical glitch. Testing took place in August 2001; grades do not reflect enhancements since then.

from baby strollers to DVD players (we found 58 "epinions" for the Nikon Coolpix 990 digital camera alone). You can tell the site to send you e-mail alerts when a new review on a particular item is posted, and add favorite writers to your Web of Trust so that their comments appear first (handy when scanning 58 camera reviews).

ANGELA WYANT/STONE

BEST AUCTIONS

EBAY

[ebay.com]

Maybe "auctions" is a misnomer. Sure, we like shopping here because the prices—even for new items—are generally less than you'd find at retail. And not even Amazon can match eBay's staggering inventory, which now includes real estate and art. But often we don't have to bid at all. The new Buy It Now feature lets sellers set a fixed price for their wares, so you no longer have to wait a week to win your *Gladiator* DVD. True, the Buy It Now price is only valid before an initial bid is made—after that, the auction continues as normal. Which is why there are eBay Stores. Here, any seller can create an online shop filled with fixed-price goods that never go on the block. Thousands of these stores are currently up and running, and each handily links to the seller's eBay feedback, which lets you quickly assess his or her reliability. Our assessment is that eBay has itself a winner.

A CLOSER LOOK: PRICE FINDERS

Price finders are like personal gofers, hunting down how much a product costs at a variety of online stores. While the services we surveyed did comparable (and admirable) work at finding bargains, there were significant differences in other areas. Here's how the sites stack up.

DEALTIME

[dealtime.com]

Deal makers: Tracks prices in a wide range of categories and offers extensive product information. Returns merchant ratings (when available) from Gómez. Checks many stores (44 for digital cameras, 19 for DVD players). For bargain hunting, success rate is comparable to MySimon and PriceGrabber.

Deal breakers: Doesn't note shipping costs. Some odd store omissions; skipped Amazon in cameras and DVD players, though it searched it in books. Irrelevant search returns popped up. Some prices were inaccurate; one was mistakenly given in Canadian dollars.

Bottom line: A solid, if flawed, performer that lacks the bells and whistles found on its rivals.

MYSIMON

[mysimon.com]

Deal makers: Covers more than a dozen product categories, though not as many as DealTime. Returns merchant ratings (when available) from Gómez. Notes shipping costs for most, but not all, merchants. Searches a vast assortment of stores; also searches Yahoo! Auctions listings (very nice). Can get e-mail notification when an item's price drops below a specified amount.

Deal breakers: For some categories (such as electronics), doesn't list shipping costs. Limited product information; you'll need to do your research before you come here. Some odd omissions; often skipped Amazon, Barnes&Noble, or CDNow in DVD searches.

Bottom line: Top marks for accurate bargain-finding. Bonus points for tracking down a couple of hard-to-find items that stumped the other sites. But PriceGrabber offers a better interface and more-useful merchant reviews.

PRICEGRABBER.COM

[pricegrabber.com]

Deal makers: A merchant review system, where users can tell (and sometimes warn) others about their experiences, is this site's trump card. Other nice touches: detailed product information, tax and shipping costs (for most vendors), links to rebates and product reviews, and a terrific search tool. Can get an e-mail alert when price drops below a specified amount.

Deal breakers: Covers fewer product categories than the other sites. And not all categories fare equally: PriceGrabber searched 41 camera stores and 16 electronics merchants, but video-game searches were abysmal; the site could not find one Dreamcast console. Some shipping fees were off.

Bottom line: While we'd like to see more vendors queried and more categories covered, our Gold Star winner gives you everything you need to find a deal—and avoid a hassle. Assuming you're not looking for video games.

BEST RETAILER RATINGS

RESELLERRATINGS.COM

[resellerratings.com]

Often the vendor with the best price is the vendor you've never heard of. Will you be burned or blessed? Keying in your credit card number is one way to find out. We've got another. ResellerRatings isn't slick, but it's required reading. Unlike sites such as **Gómez.com** that use analysts to vet e-tailers, or sites such as **BizRate.com** that tally scores based on customer surveys, ResellerRatings lets users sound off on their experiences at over 2,000 stores, including many small-scale merchants. When we went looking for a digital camera, we were unfamiliar with the four cheapest vendors PriceGrabber found. And while neither Gómez nor BizRate had entries for them, ResellerRatings did. From user comments, we learned that three of the four had a dubious track record—news we could use.

BEST CONSUMER COMPLAINT SITE

PLANETFEEDBACK

[planetfeedback.com]

Want amends for less-than-stellar service? Try asking. PlanetFeedback simplifies the complaint process. Find the company you want in the database of thousands and fill out a form detailing what happened and how strongly you feel about it (are you inconsolable or just mildly peeved?). PlanetFeedback drafts a letter that explains your story and captures your mood (fortunately, you can edit; the site tends to get dramatic). It then sends your message to the merchant—and even elected officials, if you want. A public rant seems to spur some merchants into action: We heard back from one in less than two hours. We didn't get any cash for sloppy service—just an apology. Still, we did feel better. ■

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Yahoo! Internet Life's listing of new products, promotions & Web happenings!

www.acura.com

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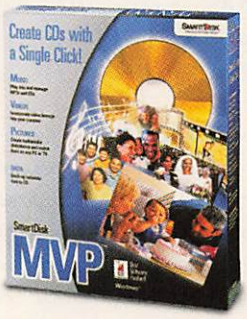
www.Nescafeusa.com

NESCAFÉ Java Jam www.Nescafeusa.com

The **Nescafé Java Jam** concert series kicks off October 26, featuring the rock band **Fuel.** The concerts run through November and visit various locations including the Los Angeles *House of Blues*. For tickets and a **free** Nescafé Java Jam CD featuring Fuel and others, see www.Nescafeusa.com!

www.smartdiskmvp.com



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With one simple interface, SmartDisk MVP organizes your digital music, video and pictures so you can search through them and burn custom audio, photo, video or multimedia CDs that you can play on a PC or home DVD player. Go to www.smartdiskmvp.com to find out more.

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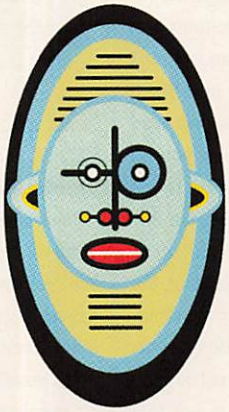

The Voodoo Music Experience October 27, 2001 Bands include: Tool, The Black Crows, Snoop Dog, Missy Elliott, Better Than Ezra, G. Love & Special Sauce, Gov't Mule. Spooks. John Mayer, Will Hope

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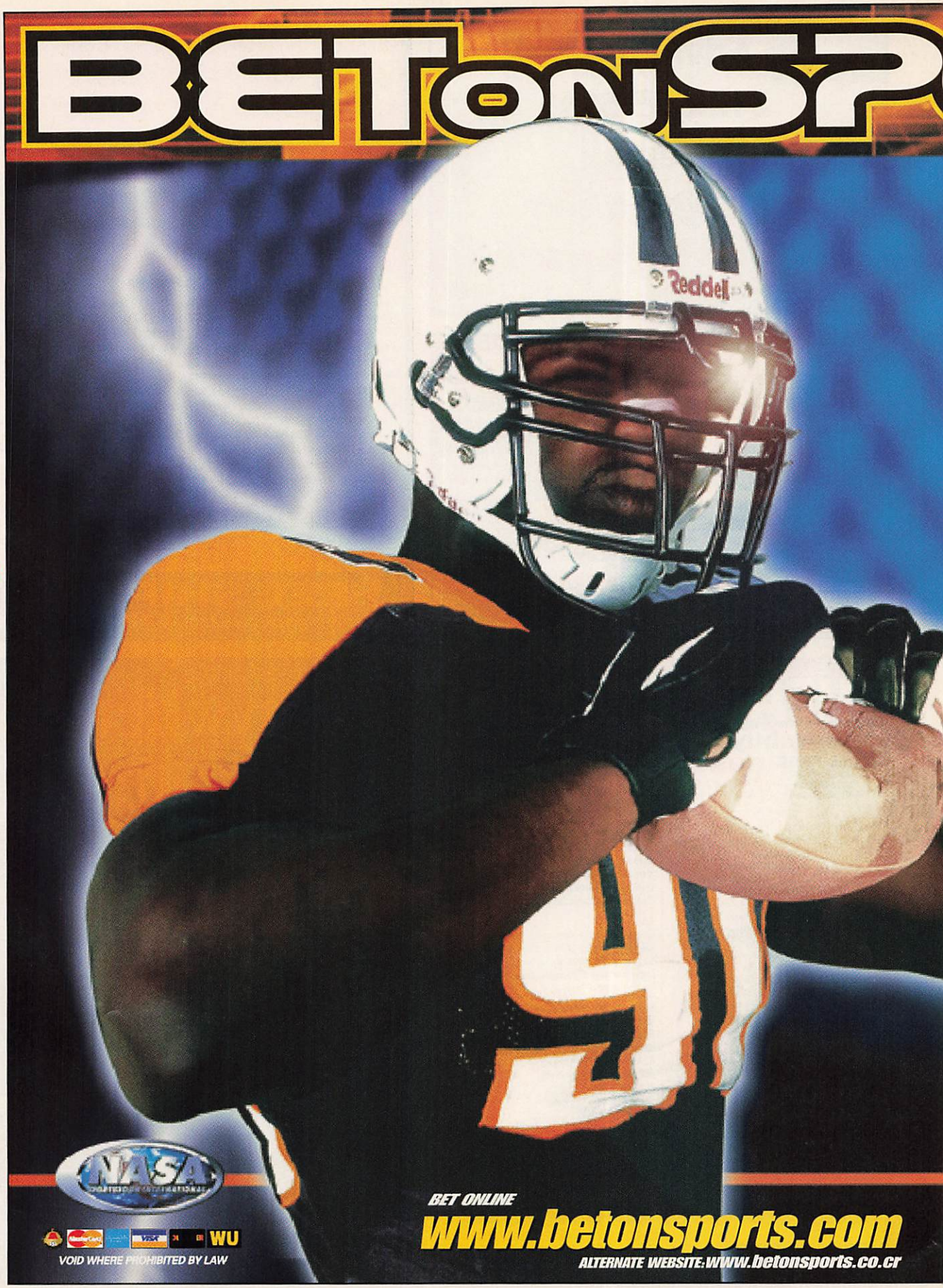

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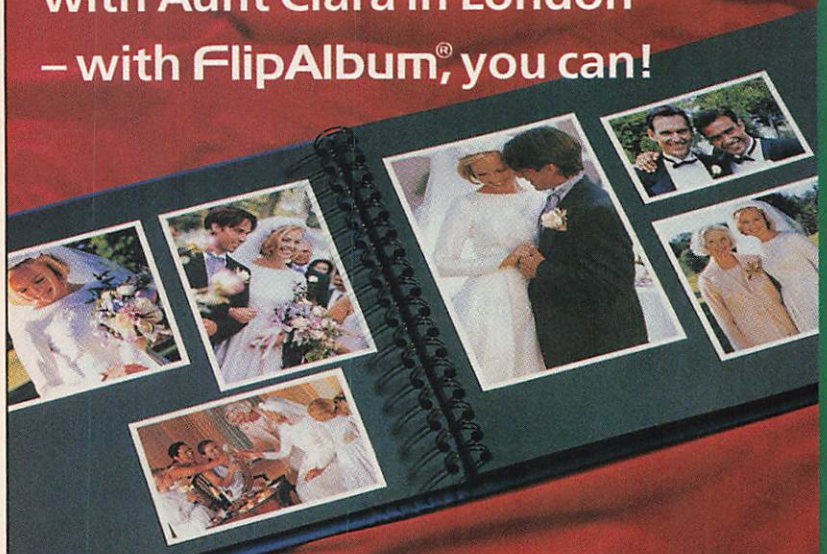

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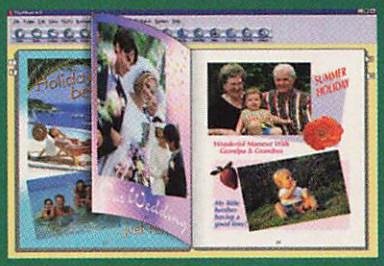

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PS

PRETTY STRANGE

Ask yourself: What would Chewbacca do?

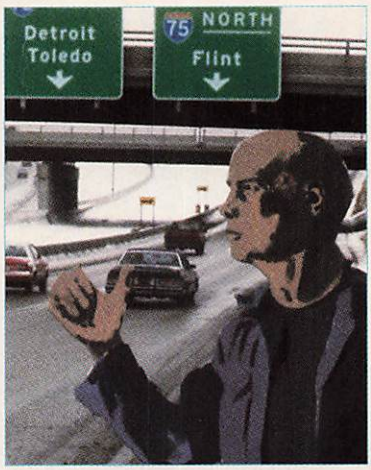
BY SCOTT ALEXANDER

FAT LANE ONLINE

HAVE YOU SEEN CALISTA FLOCKHART LATELY? Don't tell anyone we said so, but she's really been packing it in. And speaking of formerly svelte celebrities, Britney Spears and our hometown favorite, Cindy Margolis, have been hitting the Häagen-Dazs quite a bit as well. Welcome to the Fat Lane, where our anorexically inclined culture gets a well-needed dose of cellulite, courtesy of Paint Shop Pro and one slightly obsessed man. J.Lo, meet J-Wide-Load. **[www.fatlaneonline.com]**

HITCHHIKER PROJECT

IT'S ONE OF THOSE IDEAS YOU KICK YOURSELF for not having had first. Jim Pallas had to get himself (or an approximation thereof) to an art opening in Detroit. So he made a plywood cutout version of himself, put a sign around its neck that said "Detroit" (along with the gallery's address), and stuck it out by the road. The silhouette made it to Detroit in three days. Inspired, he dispatched an army of virtual hitchhikers to the blacktop, including an artist friend, Ray Johnson. **[ylem.org/artists/jpallas/hh/hh.htm]**

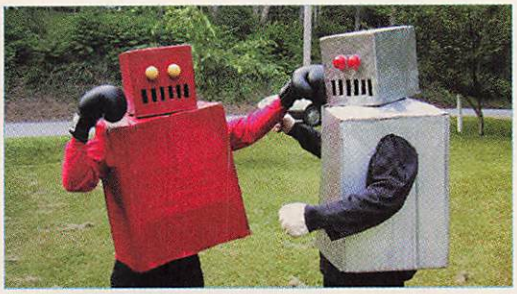


WHAT SHOULD I PUT ON THE FENCE?

HELL HATH NO FURY LIKE A WEB-HEAD scorned. After cycling to work in London one day to find a sign barring bikes at his usual hitching post, the "Fencemaster" immediately went into action—locking teakettles, stuffed animals, other humans, and anything else he could find (except bikes, of course) to the fence and posting the resulting pictures to his site. Tell him what to lock there next; it's not often you get a chance to thumb your nose at authority from another continent. **[whatshouldiputonthefence.com]**

BABY RANCHER: CODE ZOMBIE

IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE ONLINE GAMING COMPANIES GOT AROUND to doing a really high-end baby-ranching simulator. Yes, if it's Multiplayer Team Survival Horror Zombie Baby Ranching you're after, you've come to the right spot. Raise a strong legion of multitalented babies and lead them into battle against the hideous zombies that have invaded from the moon. With a cast of characters that includes a transsexual Leonard Nimoy and Sassy Babies disguised as Giant Zombie Moon Buggy Fuel Pumpers, how can you go wrong? **[somethingawful.com/babyrancher]**



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FRANK IS JUST A REGULAR OLD ROBOT, OKAY? SO GET OVER IT ALREADY! HE really doesn't appreciate all the e-mail making fun of his clunky movements and huge square head. He just wants to relax like any other robot—that is, hang out with his best friend, Ron (a less intelligent robot), sing along to Duran Duran and Frankie Goes to Hollywood, fight bad guys in the park, release other people's pets, and hit children with sticks when they get off the bus. Is that really so much to ask? **[robotfrank.com]**

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a tear-out index of the sites in this issue

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- BANKRATE.COM: CALCULATORS | bankrate.com/brm/calc/gasprice.asp
- LOWERMYBILLS.COM | lowermybills.com
- SENSIBLE HOME: CUT YOUR UTILITY BILLS | dulley.com
- ENERGYCHECKUP.COM | www.energycheckup.com

LIFESTYLE & COMMUNITY

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- YAHOO! GEOCITIES | geocities.yahoo.com
- HOMESTEAD | homestead.com
- AOL HOMETOWN | hometown.aol.com
- HTML PRIMER | htmlprimer.com
- HTML: AN INTERACTIVE TOOL FOR BEGINNERS | davesite.com/webstation/html
- NATIONAL TURKEY FEDERATION: CONSUMER | www.turkeyfed.org/consumer/main.html
- ABOUT: VEGETARIAN CUISINE: VEGETARIAN THANKSGIVING | vegetarian.about.com/library/holidays/blthanksgiving.htm
- FARM SANCTUARY: SHELTER & ADOPTIONS | farmsanctuary.org/adopt/sponsor.htm
- STU'S WILD TURKEY HUNTING SCHOOL | bowhunting.net/naspecies/calling.htm
- BRIDGE TO THE TANGO | bridgetothetango.com
- TANGO CITY | tangocity.com
- TODO TANGO | todotango.com
- ELDERWEB | elderweb.com
- ADMINISTRATION ON AGING: ELDER PAGE | aoa.gov/elderpage.html
- ELDERCARE ONLINE | ec-online.net
- FABULOUSFOODS.COM | fabulousfoods.com
- SIMPLY RECIPES | simply-recipes.com
- EPICURIOUS | epicurious.com

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- AMAZON.COM | amazon.com
- CDNOW | cdnow.com
- WALMART.COM | walmart.com
- PRICEGRABBER.COM | pricegrabber.com
- YAHOO! SHOPPING | shopping.yahoo.com
- TECHBARGAINS.COM | techbargains.com
- BARNES&NOBLE.COM | bn.com
- STAPLES.COM | staples.com
- EPINIONS.COM | www.epinions.com
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- PLANETFEEDBACK | planetfeedback.com
- JCPENNEY | jcpenney.com
- DEALTIME | dealtime.com
- MYSIMON | mysimon.com

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- FAT LANE ONLINE | www.fatlaneonline.com
- HITCH HIKER PROJECT | ylem.org/artists/jpallas/hh/hh.htm
- WHAT SHOULD I PUT ON THE FENCE? | whatshouldiputonthefence.com
- BABY RANCHER: CODE ZOMBIE | somethingawful.com/babyrancher
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- MODERN HUMORIST | modernhumorist.com

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pages 94-100

- PALM STORE | store.palm.com
- COMPAQ HOME & HOME OFFICE | athome.compaq.com
- HANDERA | www.handera.com
- HANDSPRING | handspring.com
- RIO DIGITAL AUDIO | www.riohome.com
- SONY STYLE | sonystyle.com
- NOMAD WORLD | nomadworld.com
- FUJIFILM | fujifilm.com
- NIKON | nikonusa.com
- KODAK EASYSHARE DX3900 | kodak.com/go/dx3900
- PLAYSTATION.COM | us.playstation.com
- NINTENDO | nintendo.com
- XBOX | xbox.com

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- DOTCOMSCOOP.COM | dotcomscoop.com
- DOTCOMDOOM | dotcomdoom.com
- F---EDCOMPANY | f---edcompany.com
- WORKPLACE FAIRNESS | nerinet.org
- MONSTER.COM | monster.com
- DIALPAD | dialpad.com
- LOWERMYBILLS.COM | lowermybills.com
- QUICKEN.COM DEBT REDUCTION PLANNER | quicken.com/shopping/debt
- AETNA FINANCIAL SERVICES: CALCULATORS | aetnafinancial.com/your_life/info_center/calculators
- MYVESTA.ORG | myvesta.org
- FINANCIAL ENGINES | financialengines.com
- MSN MONEY: INVESTING | moneycentral.msn.com/investor/home.asp
- QUICKEN.COM: SECURITY EVALUATOR | quicken.com/investments/seceval
- RISKGRADES | riskgrades.com
- SELLSIGNAL.COM | www.sellsignal.com
- FOLIOFN | foliofn.com
- INVESTINGINBONDS.COM | investinginbonds.com
- TREASURYDIRECT | www.treasurydirect.gov

THE MUSIC PRESERVATION SOCIETY pages 106-107

- HOOBELLATOO | hoobellatoo.org
- WWW.SKUNTRY.COM | skuntry.com
- HAND ME DE BOUNTY DOWN | yil.com/annpittman
- STONY PLAIN RECORDS | www.stonyplainrecords.com

INSIDE INSTANT MESSAGING

pages 108-110

- AOL INSTANT MESSENGER | aol.com/aim
- ICQ | ICQ.COM
- IMUNIFIED | www.imunified.org
- IMICI MESSENGER | www.imici.com
- JABBER | jabber.org
- TRILLIAN | trillian.cc
- ODIGO | odigo.com
- NET2PHONE | net2phone.com
- ACTIVEBUDDY | activebuddy.com
- AIM SERVICE FOR MOBILE PHONES | aol.com/aim/mobile
- MSN MOBILE | mobile.msn.com
- MAJESTIC | www.ea.com/worlds/games/pw_majstc00/hatted_mj20_age.jsp

DEPARTMENTS»

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- BLOOMBERG UNIVERSITY | bloomberguniversity.com
- BARNES & NOBLE UNIVERSITY | bnuniversity.com
- GE CENTER FOR FINANCIAL LEARNING | financiallearning.com
- SMARTMONEY UNIVERSITY | smartmoneyuniversity.com
- BULBS.COM | bulbs.com
- BRITANNICA.COM | britannica.com
- BARTLEBY.COM: COLUMBIA ENCYCLOPEDIA | bartleby.com/65

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- WEBMD HEALTH: DESSERT WIZARD | my.webmd.com/dessertwizard
- THE CYBERCAFE SEARCH ENGINE | cybercaptive.com
- RULESCENTRAL.COM | rulescentral.com
- UPS QUICK COST CALCULATOR | wwwapps.ups.com/servlet/QCCServlet
- KEMWEL ONLINE | kemwel.com
- AFTERNAPSTER | afternapster.com
- EATDRINKDINE | eatdrinkdine.com
- FREE TV TICKETS | tvtix.com
- MAIL2WEB.COM | mail2web.com
- GETSPEED.COM | getspeed.com
- PROGENEALOGISTS: YOUR SURNAME IN THE U.S. | progenealogists.com/surnamestudy.htm
- AIC AUTOSITE: TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE | autosite.com/garage/symptoms/trblsht.asp
- COVERPRO | directlogic.com/coverpro.htm
- INTEL PHILANTHROPIC PEER-TO-PEER PROGRAM | intel.com/cure
- HAIR PRO | visualmusic.com

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- TRINITY ALPS ADVENTURES | gorp.com/trinityalps
- COFFEE CREEK CHALET | www.coffeecreekchalet.com
- COFFEE CREEK RANCH | coffeecreekranch.com
- CARR CREEK CABIN | carrvilleinn.com/pages/Cabin/cccabin.htm
- A RECIPE I DIDN'T GET FROM MY MOTHER: GRAVY WITH MADEIRA | www.netecon.com/turkey_gravy.htm

- RECIPESOURCE: GRAVY FOR TURKEY OR CHICKEN | recipesource.com/side-dishes/sauces/09/rec0948.html
- EPICURIOUS | epicurious.com
- WE BUY EMPTIES | webuyempties.com
- RECYCLERS USA | recyclersusa.com
- FUNDINGFACTORY | www.fundingfactory.com

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- CYBERREBATE | cyberrebate.com
- DISCOVER | discovercard.com
- UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK: CYBERREBATE | www.nyeb.uscourts.gov/announcements.htm
- YAHOO! GROUPS: CYBERREBATE-SUPPORT4LOST-REBATES | ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/CyberRebate-Support4Lost-Rebates
- CYBERREBATE REBATE RECOVERY ALLIANCE | communities.msn.com/CyberrebateRebateRecoveryAlliance
- CARSDIRECT.COM | carsdirect.com
- THE FOUNDATION FOR TAXPAYER AND CONSUMER RIGHTS | consumerwatchdog.org

STYLE: SITES & SCENES page 36

- ELUXURY | eluxury.com
- SAKS FIFTH AVENUE | saks.com
- BROOKS BROTHERS | brooksbrothers.com

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- VIVIANLIVES.COM | vivianlives.com
- TARGET | target.com
- WINE.COM BY EVINEYARD | wine.com
- POLO.COM | polo.com
- COLE HAAN | www.colehaan.com
- TATEOSSIAN | www.tateossian.com
- KENNETH COLE | kennethcole.com

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- JCREW.COM | jcrew.com
- AMERICAN EAGLE OUTFITTERS | ae.com
- TIMBERLAND | timberland.com
- ROCKPORT | rockport.com

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- IAN MCKELLEN | mckellen.com
- THEONERING.NET | theonering.net
- LORD OF THE RINGS.COM | lordoftherings.com
- THE LORD OF THE RINGS | lordoftherings.net
- CARTOON NETWORK.COM | cartoonnetwork.com
- GOTHAM GIRLS | warnerbros.com/web/gothamgirls/cartoons.jsp
- HARDBALL WITH CHRIS MATTHEWS | msnbc.com/chat
- OPRAH'S BOOK CLUB CHAT | oprah.com/com/chat/com_chat_main.html
- COLDCUT | piratetv.net
- DCN: DIGITAL CLUB NETWORK | dcn.com
- AXECALIBER | modernmusicandmore.com/realaudio.html
- THE N.E.W. SHOW | cnnfn.cnn.com/community/chat.html?fri
- EVERQUEST: SHADOWS OF LUCLIN | everquest.com/luclin
- THE VOTE: BUSH, GORE & THE SUPREME COURT | thevotebook.com
- KALVOS & DAMIAN'S NEW MUSIC BAZAAR | kalvos.org
- SACRED CONCERT | kdfc.com

COOL TOOLS pages 52-53

- XYBERNAUT | xybernaut.com
- WACOM | www.wacom.com
- PHILIPS AUDIO | www.expanium.philips.com
- PIONEER | pioneerelectronics.com
- THRUSTMASTER | thrustmaster.com
- SHOP INTEL | shop-intel.com

WEB USER pages 54-58

- ALTAVISTA: TRANSLATE WITH BABEL FISH | world.altavista.com
- FREETRANSLATION | www.freetranslation.com
- SYSTRAN | systransoft.com
- WORLDLINGO | worldlingo.com
- NAVIGATOR 6.1 | browsers.netscape.com
- 12GHOSTS SHREDDER | 12ghosts.com/ghosts/shredder.htm
- ALTAVISTA | av.com
- LINK-SPY.COM | link-spy.com
- SYMANTEC SECURITY CHECK | security2.norton.com
- MCAFEE.COM VIRUSSCAN ONLINE | mcafee.com/myapps/vso
- PANDA ACTIVESCAN ONLINE VIRUS CHECK | pandasoftware.com/activescan/com
- TREND MICRO HOUSECALL | housecall.antivirus.com
- SYMANTEC NORTON ANTIVIRUS 2001 | symantec.com/nav
- CNET.COM | cnet.com

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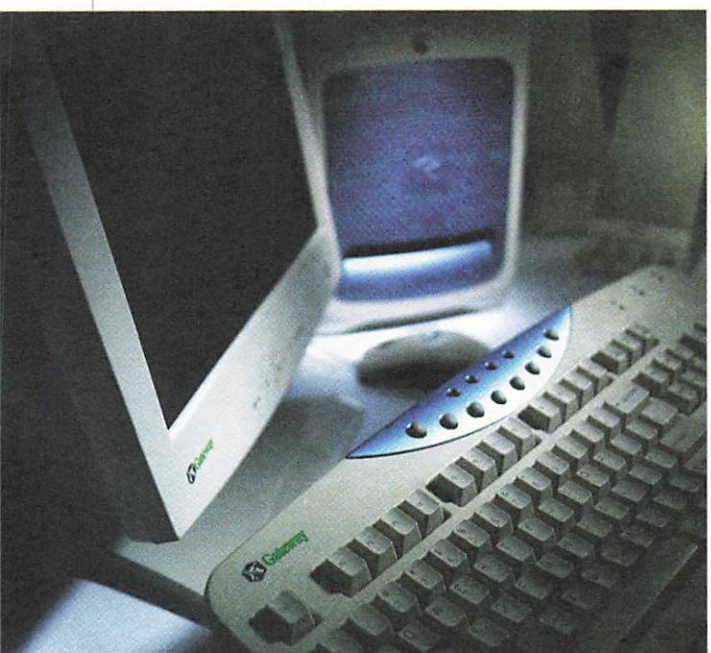
NEW, NOTABLE & FUN pages 114-115

- BUSINESS: THE NEW YORK TIMES | nytimes.com/pages/business
- BLOOMINGDALE'S | bloomingdales.com
- WINE.COM BY EVINEYARD | wine.com
- SPORT MONKEYS: THE EXTREME SOCK JOCKS | sportmonkeys.com
- VOICE INTERACTIV.COM | voiceinteractiv.com
- YAHOO! BY PHONE | phone.yahoo.com
- GOOGLE ZEITGEIST | google.com/press/zeitgeist.html
- DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VETERANS DAY HOME PAGE | www.va.gov/pubaff/vetsday
- VFW: VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS | vfw.org
- VIETNAM WOMEN'S MEMORIAL PROJECT | vietnamwomensmemorial.org
- FOG OF WAR | washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/fogofwar/fogofwar.htm



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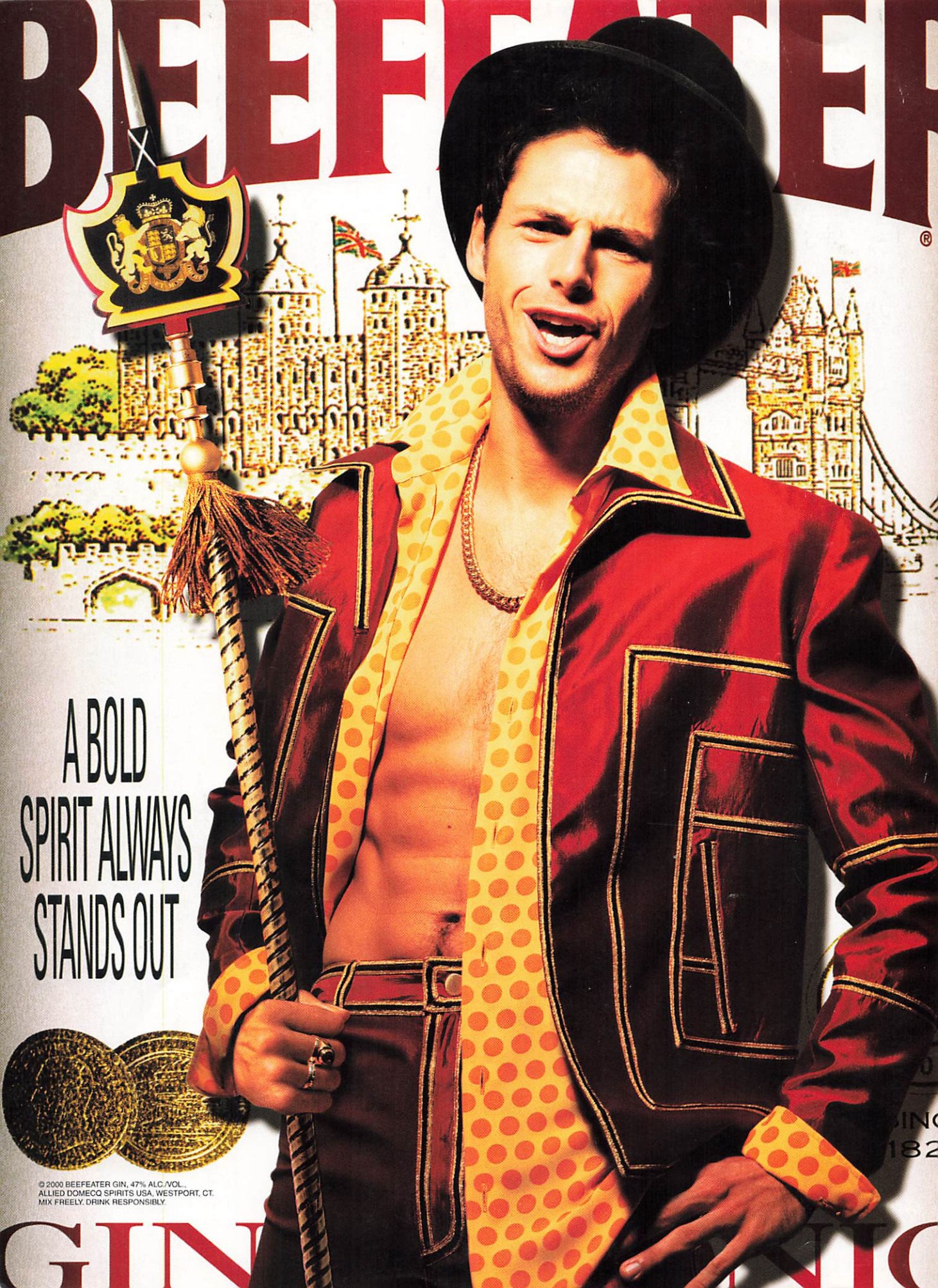
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